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PUBLISHERS, 214 GEORGE STREET, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA. EDITION OF 1975
ORDINARY COPIES, AND 25 SUPERIOR COPIES, NUMBERED, PUBLISHED 28TH
NOVEMBER, 1904.

PR
9615.25
S832x



IN this Book is reprinted, with some minor alterations, the series of THE BULLETIN BOOKLETS issued on several occasions from 1899 to 1903. These in the order of publication were :

- I. THE HIDDEN TIDE, by Roderic Quinn.
- II. A ROSE OF REGRET, by James Hebblethwaite.
- III. THE CIRCLING HEARTHS, by Roderic Quinn.
- IV. DREAMS IN FLOWER, by Louise Mack.
- V. THE WEST WIND, by Hubert Church.
- VI. DAWNWARD? by Bernard O'Dowd.

Tables of Contents will be found at the end of each Booklet. To this Volume are added portraits of the Authors, and a General Index.



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THE HIDDEN TIDE



Portrait of
Roderic Quinn



The Hidden Tide

Roderic Quinn 



These verses were originally published in The Bulletin.

THE HIDDEN TIDE.

The Hidden Tide.



WITHIN the world a second world
That circles ceaselessly :
Stars in the sky and sister stars—
Turn in your eyes and see !

Tides of the sea that rise and fall,
Aheave from Pole to Pole—
And kindred swayings, veiled but felt,
That noise along the soul.

Yon moon, noon-rich, high-throned, remote,
And pale with pride extreme,
Draws up the sea, but what white moon
Exalts the tide of Dream ?

The Fisher-Folk who cast their nets
In Vision's golden tide
Oft bring to light misshapen shells,
And nothing worth beside.

And so their worn hands droop adown,
Their singing throats are dumb ;
The Inner-Deep withholds its pearls
Till turn of tide be come.

But patience ! wait—the good tide turns,
The waters inward set ;
And lo, behold ! aleap, alive
With glowing fish the net !

O Toilers of the Hidden Seas !
Ye have strange gain and loss,
Dragging the Deeps of Soul for pearls,
And oft-times netting dross.

The
Hidden
Tide.

Flushed to the lips with golden light,
And dark with sable gloom;
Thrilled by a thousand melodies,
And silent like a tomb.

Fierce are the winds across your realm,
As though some Demon veiled
Had loosed the gales of Spirit-land
To ravage ways unsailed.

But still sweet hours befall at times,
Rich lit and full of ease;
The afterglow is like the light
Of sunset on tired seas.

And worse, perhaps, may be the lot
Of those whose fate is sleep;
The sodden souls without a tide,
Dense as a rotten deep.

Pain paves the way for keener joy,
And wondrous thoughts uproll
When the large moon of Peace locks down
On high tide in the Soul.

SPRING-SONG.

The
Hidden
Tide.



ING out and be happy!

The Spring is at hand,
The grass green, and sappy
The trees o' the land.

Sing! for the breeze is
Rustling and silky,
And toys with and teases
Long blossoms and milky.

The root in the juices
Unfrosted drinks deep,
The loving wave sluices
The weeds as they sleep.

Sing out! for the bees in
Their quest of wild honey
Are haunting the trees in
Green places and sunny.

Distant blue reaches
And green hills invite,
Green hills and long beaches
And roads red and white.

Locked waters are calling
With many gold voices,
Where tides gently falling
Make soft liquid noises.

Broad-spreading sun-glamour
Wraps blossom and stream,
Gold-tinting the armour
Of beetles that dream.

The
Hidden
Tide.

On wet rocks and ledges
Are massed starry mosses,
And painting proud ridges
Grow tiny pink roses.

Sing out! and let trouble
Another pursue:
It will burst like a bubble
And vanish for you.

Out, out on old Sorrow,
Who skulks in her sable!
Laugh gaily and borrow
Gay laughs while you're able.

If any care rankles—
Away! and behold
Pink feet and white ankles
On beaches of gold;

And surf that runs after
To kiss clinging dresses,
And white teeth and laughter,
And naughty brown tresses!

THE FRONTIER-LAND.

The
Hidden
Tide.



YOU of the past, are you present?
Draw nearer! my heart is sore.
Was yours the fall of the foot in the hall?
Was yours the face at the door?

As I lifted my eyes I saw you;
You vanished and all was still;
And only outside the white owl cried,
And the moon stared over the hill.

Wan-blue were your eyes, O Shadow,
And paler your aspect than seems
The mystical star that glimmers afar
In a land of mysterious dreams.

O Shadow, the past is present,
And empty your coffin and tomb;
Draw near, draw near, chill child of fear,
From the frontier-land of Gloom!

When you were a girl, grey Shadow,
And life in these veins ran red,
My heart went out to your golden mouth
And the curls about your head.

Did you know that I loved you, Shadow?
Did you guess whence the violets came?
And the delicate heart with its Cupid dart,
All opal and ruby-flame?

Ah, then brown gold were the lashes
That shadowed your dreaming eyes,
And your teeth were pearl 'neath the coral curl
Of twin portals of Paradise.

The
Hidden
Tide.

And warmer your cheeks were and softer
(Alas, they are pale and cold!)
Than the rose of the East, or the wine of the feast
Red-rimming its carven gold.

It was all so sad, O Shadow,
And you faded away so soon,
Like a note that flies and fades and dies
Ere it grows to a golden tune.

Gone! utterly gone, O Shadow;
No whisper, no word let fall;
No light is shed, and the moon is dead,
And a chill creeps up the hall.

I shall follow and follow you, Shadow,
Till the sun, remote and red,
Burns like a spark, and dim and dark
Rise up the hosts of dead.



THE SONG OF THE VIOLIN.

The
Hidden
Tide.



HE stood in the curtains played over by light—
The tinted curtains—a tired, sweet girl,
With exquisite arms under laces of white
Like an ivory figure in mother-of-pearl.

I entered; she saw me, but made no move;
To some I nodded, to some replied;
(A violin somewhere was singing of love)
She blushed and paled, and I stood at her side.

I asked for a dance—she shook her head
And laughed like a petted, petulant queen;
She had promised them all to others, she said,
“And you are so late—and where have you been?”

They were talking low in the long, bright room,
And I answered her, moving the blind aside—
“Out there on the lawn in the velvet gloom,
Wooing a woman to make her my bride.”

She suddenly shook like a startled dove;
Ruffled and paled and hung her head
(A violin somewhere was singing of love,
And bitter-sweet were the things it said).

“This heat is stifling!”—she moved away.
“Out here,” I whispered, “and hark to the tide!”
“The woman—where is she?” I heard her say;
“Now show me the woman you wooed for a bride?”

“Here on the land—and there on the sea,
Full length amid roses and tall as the skies;
And now do you see her?” She whispered “I see,”
A white hand on my shoulder, a laugh in her eyes.

"Do you love her—this lady so mystical, fine?

I dwindle before her, a plain little miss:

She has stars in her hair—only roses in mine;

But the Night has no heart and the Night cannot kiss."

"Not now, if you please, sir!"—a moment she strove—

The curve of my arm softly circled her head . . .

A violin somewhere was singing of love,

And "Kiss, kiss, kiss, and kiss!" it said.



AT HER DOOR.

The
Hidden
Tide.



PEN! Open! Open!

I am here at your door outside;
The sea's blue tide flows speedily,
And ebbs a thin red tide."

The woman rose from her warm white bed,
Threw back her hair and smiled;
The ears of scorn heard the words of love,
And the wind and the words were wild.

"Wake! Awake! Awake!
And hearken the woe outside:
The moon is hid in cloudiness,
Calleth and calleth the tide."

The woman stood in the silence still
As a thing men carve from stone,
Her eyes burned largely in the dark,
And the smile, like a stain, stayed on.

"Listen! Listen! Listen!
Hear you the rain to-night?
A warm dark rain is falling too,
And I grow ghostly-white."

The woman took three steps and bowed;
The smile waned from her lip;
She heard the dripping of the rain
And a soft thick other drip.

"Open! Open! Open!
I die in the dark alone.
My voice goes up in weariness
Against your heart of stone."

The
Hidden
Tide.

The moon to a cloud-cleft stealing
Gazed down on the yearning tide ;
The woman opened the soaked door
And stood in the rain outside.

Silence ! Stillness ! She whispers,
“ Ah, Love, that death should be ! ”
He sighed, “ Your lips are loveliness ! ”
And she sobbed, “ Woe is me ! ”

The woman pressed his dead white face
With her face as deadly white :
The moon drew in behind a cloud
And the tide moaned through the night.



STARS IN THE SEA.

The
Hidden
Cide.



TOOK a boat on a starry night
And went for a row on the water,
And she danced like a child on a wake
of light
And bowed where the ripples caught her.

I vowed as I rowed on the velvet blue
Through the night and the starry splendour,
To woo and sue a maiden I knew
Till she bent to my pleadings tender.

My painted boat she was light and glad
And gladder my heart with wishing,
And I came in time to a little lad
Who stood on the rocks a-fishing.

I said "Ahoy!" and he said "Ahoy!"
And I asked how the fish were biting;
"And what are you trying to catch, my boy,
Bream, silver and red—or whiting?"

"Neither," he answered, "the seaweed mars
My line, and the sharp shells sunder—
I am trying my luck with those great big stars
Down there in the round skies under."

"Good-bye!" from him, and "Good-bye!" from me,
And never a laugh came after;
So many go fishing for stars in the sea
That it's hardly a subject for laughter.



E wake and sigh, we sleep, and lo,
The gentlest eyes look love and weep!
Ah, why do lost loves tease us so
When we lie down to sleep?

Awake, my wife! how shall I dare
The silence?—closer—heart to heart!
Your breath is wandering in my hair;
But yet, how far apart!

Long have we lived like those that loved
With wedded hand and mingled mouth,
The truth suppressed . . . but strangely moved,
My heart is dust and drouth.

I dreamt she came—a maiden pale,
A maiden pale, dead long ago;
And she spake words of no avail,
And she gave looks of woe.

Down streamed the brown hair round her head;
She whispered, and with sudden start
I rose and kissed her roses red,
And pressed her to my heart.

The roses paled; like shadowed light
She vanished, and I could not speak;
Upon the blind the moon was white,
My lips were on your cheek!

The woman said, "We sleep, and lo,
The gentlest eyes look love and weep!
Ah, why do lost loves tease us so
When we lie down to sleep?"

"I dreamt he came, the king of men,
Who drifted deathward long years gone,
The love-light in his eyes as when
With fire of life they shone.

"A rosebud like a lonely pearl
From his pale fingers trembled low,
And to his lips he pressed a curl—
A curl of long ago.

"And 'This,' he said, 'was love of mine,'—
The rosebud waned in mist away;
And 'This,' he said, 'was gift of thine'—
The curl of gold grew grey.

"Then down he bent in true-love-wise—
I could but sigh, I could not speak;
We kissed—the moon shone in these eyes,
Your lips were on my cheek."

They slept no more that dreamful night;
A cloud made dark the moonlit room;
Lost Youth was nigh them with its white
Ghost lovers from the tomb.



HE merry-making's over,
The riverside is still,
The Sun, a radiant rover,
Gone down behind the hill.

The red Road goes awinding
Along the riverside,
The River, no man minding,
Winds on to meet the tide.

O Naiad of green places!
I pray you pause and say
How many pretty faces
Looked down on you to-day?

The River runs in silence
(A fern frond is her load)
Just here and just a mile hence
She curves to kiss the road.

And now the kiss is over,
And now the tryst is done,
By flats of fern and clover
The River ripples on.

Again the Road turns to her,
Red-winding through the green,
The Road would pause and woo her
But gray rocks stand between.

And here he rounds a boulder
And hurries to her side:
The River turns her shoulder:
She will not be his bride.

O fickle River, straying
Through green lands on and on,
A fern tree heard you saying
"The Road will come anon."

Not so, but you will waken
To lonely days and sore,
The Road a vow has taken
To play Love's fool no more.

On high the sunset lingers
With one still star above,
And there the merry singers
Sing silverly of Love.

And now in distance dewy
They halt awhile, and so
Wave hands with "Coo-ee, Coo-ee!"
Ho, laggard down below!"

If she should cease to worry
And say, "I love but you"—
"O hurry, hurry, hurry!"
And "Adieu, Adieu, Adieu!"

This one last chance I give her
To lighten my heart's load,
And if she play the River
Then I shall prove the Road.

I caught her, heard her sighing,
Saw her face and felt its charm . . .
'Tis sweet when Day is dying
To walk so, arm in arm.

A SONG OF WINDS.



Woe to the weak when the sky is shrouded,
And the wind of the salt-way sobs as
it dies!

Woe to the weak! for a great dejection
Droops their spirits and drowns their
eyes.

Woe to the weak who tire of fetters,
Of grim life-fetters that gall and bind!
For the Sea tells stories of death made lovely,
And a siren sings in the nor'-east wind.

It wanders the coast like a tombless spectre,
And drips dank dew on the drooping leaf;
And the soul grows pensive with dim suggestions
Of grey old troubles and ancient grief.

'T is grave and low, and with woeful plaining
Sighs death-notes under a sky of grey,
And who hath an ear may hear the voices
Of pale men dead on its streaked sea-way.

In fading twilights o'er sullen seascapes,
A lost, wan wind 'neath a dead grey sky,
It swoons to land like a weary swimmer,
Sobs and falters and turns to die.

Seeking a tomb in dark, coast caverns,
Where the wet rust reddens the fretted stone.
The wandering sea-thing sinks to silence—
Sinks and dies with a last low moan;

A last low moan and deadly stillness . . .
Then the sudden crash of a league-long sea,
And fresh from his den in the white ice region
The wolf of the South is speeding free.

Cleaving the air with his chill grey shoulders
And trampling the sea to foam beneath,
The Wolf of the South goes howling nor'ard,
A mastless hull in his long white teeth.

And flying high, a far faint phalanx
Wings its way to a northern clime,
Sending feathers of sad sound downward,
Singing songs of an evil time—

An evil time, for the black Night chases,
And darkness swallows the trailing flock ;
An evil season of wild white weather,
And foam and tumult on reef and rock ;

Of yellow floods on the northern rivers,
And fierce waves swaying from crest to trough ;
Of creaking schooners wearing seaward,
And signals crying—Stand off! Stand off!

Of frothy flakes on the wild waste flying,
And anxious faces and fateful news ;
Of close-reefed topsails and battened hatches,
And straining engines and racing screws.

Of pumice-stone and brown weeds riven,
Riven and flung on the hissing sand ;
Of squadroned waves and their mighty charging
And the stern repulse of the frowning land.

Of whipped white faces faring stormward
With smothered words and wrecked replies ;
Of trees blown down on the windy ridges,
And stormy shoutings and tempest cries ;

Of eyes that dance to the wild wind's music,
Of strange sweet thrills through the calm-sick form ;
Of Storm, throned king on the mad white ocean,
Of Storm the Monarch—all hail to Storm!

LOVE'S GRAVE.



FTEN Poesy hath said,
Here and there dear Love lies dead;
But never yet a poet tarried
To tell the world where Love lies buried.

Masters, you have gravely seen
All things brown that once were green,
Therefore you that wept and merried
Should know best where Love lies buried.

Then the Masters sighed and said,
While the lip is cherry red
And Youth touches, tints all faces
With his gallant lights and graces,

And the eye is all unwet
You shall never answer get,
Though you quested long and tarried,
Asking where dear Love lies buried.

Truly, truly, we have seen
All things brown that once were green,
And our eyes salt-white with weeping
Know the grave where Love lies sleeping.

For we saw where Age and Death
Laid him at his latest breath—
In a furrow Grief had graven
While Time greyed gold tress and raven.

In the thin and hollow cheek
(Roses red you may not seek)
In the stricken spirit bending
Under Pain-of-Life unending :

In the sad and pensive eye
(A dim lake where drowned visions lie)
And in sunless souls unmarried,
Love—and more than Love—lies buried.

**The
Hidden
Tide.**





HE sat on the rocks—her fireless eyes
Teased and tired with the thoughts of
yore,
And paining her sense were alien skies,
An alien sea and an alien shore.

In gold-green dusks she glimpsed new flowers
And the glittering wings of gleaming birds,
But haunting her still were English bowers
And the clinging sweetness of old love-words.

A soft breeze murmured of unknown shores
And laughed as it touched her with fingers light,
But she mourned the more for the wind that roars
Down sullen coasts on a northern night.

Like topaz gems on a sable dome
The stranger stars stole shyly forth;
She saw no stars like the stars of home
That burned white-fired in the frosty north.

A restless sea was at her feet,
A restless sea of darkest blue,
The lights burned dimly on The Fleet,
And these were all the ships it knew.

She watched the dark tides rise and fall,
The lion-tides that night and noon
Range round the world and moan and call
In sad sea-voices to the moon.

Through hour and hour they ebbed and flowed,
Till last with sudden splendour Day
Lit all the scene with gold and showed
An arrow black on a garb of grey.



YOU stood beside the flowers,
Yourself a flower;
And on your face
The twilight stayed another hour,
It shone so pale;
And all around men talked as in a
market-place.

I heard them talk, and felt
No interest stir
In what they said.
Roses were nigh you, and upon the air
The breath of love,
And all about the world moved on with nervous tread.

I heard it not; for down
And round about
My soul you drew
The veils that shut the loud earth out,
And I and you
Were there alone, no one beside but I and you!

What words were those we said?
Old ones, perchance,
Pale with the pain
Of all who 've kissed and talked romance,
And sighed farewell,
And mixed their tears and kissed, and sighed farewell
again.

We stood a sainted while,
And then your hand
Sought to be free,
And you were gone and all the land
Was under gloom,
And lamps were lit for other men, but none for me.

The
Hidden
Tide.

I stood and watched you go,
And suddenly
The loud world grew
Like some great-voiced, insetting sea ;
And men went by,
Talking of trade and war and all but love and you.



THE RED-TRESSED MAIDEN.

The
Hidden
Tide.



RED she is in a robe of sable,
Rosy with pictures and tales to tell,
She is a fairy and yet no fable,
Weaving the dreams that we love so
well.

Out in the dark where the night-winds hurry
And dead leaves carpet the silent bush,
She hath a charm for the mind a-worry,
For the worn white face a fresh young blush.

Tell her a story of some love laid in
The grave long since with a maiden white,
She will not taunt you, the Red-Tressed Maiden
Dressed in her mantle of starless night.

With fingers potent as rich wine chosen
From dusty cellars where years lie dead,
She melts the ice in the veins long frozen,
And the blood runs chainless, the heart grows red.

Her ears have hearkened the joyous laughter,
Man-made, maid-lifted, through years and years
To frescoed dome and to smoky rafter,
And tears and tears and ceaseless tears.

Old as the world, and some say older,
Is she, and yet she is young and sweet:
She heard the story the Cave-Man told her,
When hearts were bolder and ruder their beat.

No tale so trifling but she will listen:
The long day ended, the day's toil done;
Then wheresoever her great eyes glisten
An ancient battle is fought and won.

The
Hidden
Tide.

She is ready to hearken to some chance roamer,
With a lyre on his shoulder, a lilt on his tongue,
As she was of old to the blind-eyed Homer
Who sang high strains when the world was young.

On winter nights when the roads are cheerless
And west winds under a frosty moon,
She paints us Summer in colours peerless
And the broad gold charm of a tropic noon.

On summer evenings in sylvan places
(The picnic over and stars in the skies),
She heightens the blush on sun-kissed faces
And deepens the dream in dear young eyes.

And who is the Maiden? When Night is about you,
Pile high the dry leaves and the dead wood, and so
Make a light for the darkness within and without you . . .
And now do you see her—and now do you know?



A SONG OF KEATS.

The
Hidden
Tide.



IS a tarnished book and old,
Edges frayed and covers green!
But between the covers gold—
Gold and jewels in between.

And this written (see, O see!
How old Time hath made it dim)
*“For one song Keats gave to me
I kneel down and worship him.”*

He who wrote these lines is dust,
All of him is passed away;
Some hand closed his eyes, I trust,
Drew the blind to darken day.

Did lips kiss him at the end,
Love-lips tremulous yet brave?
Had he mistress, child, or friend
To sow green grass upon his grave?

Nay, we know not—it is long
Since he tired of Life's deceits,
Closed his ears to sigh and song,
Parted with this book, **John Keats.**

Year by year the Poet thrives;
Summer smiles and winter weeps;
La Belle Dame Sans Merci lives,
But a heart that loved her sleeps.

Who would woeful go to miss
Roses red in thorns arrayed,
When he might with surer bliss
Love a milkwhite Devon maid?

The
Hidden
Tide.

Beauty kindles man's desire,
Beauty fades and groweth faint;
But the girls who never tire
Are the girls that poets paint.

When the moon has taken wings
And the twilight hour is come,
Grey the woods, and no bird sings:
Grey the world beyond, and dumb:

Neither light is there nor breeze,
Rose to redden, thorn to pain;
Till, look! look! Among the trees,
A sudden bird! a scarlet stain!

So he tired of Fate's defeats,
Life's dead trees and woodlands grim,
Till sudden-sweet a song of Keats
Made life a red rose bower for him.



A GREY DAY.

The
Hidden
Tide.



HE long still day is ending
In hollow and on height,
The lighthouse seaward sending
White rays of steady light:

A little cloud is leading
A great cloud west by north;
Woe waits on ships unheeding
That blindly venture forth . . .

All day the sea, dull-heaving,
Moaned low like one who ails,
While spectre hands were weaving
A veil o'er distant sails.

All day with drooping feather
And wings devoid of gleam,
The sea-birds grouped together
Forbore to wheel and scream.

Salt-arms and river-reaches
Were glazed and leaden-hued,
And haunting sodden beaches
Went grey-haired Solitude.

The dead leaves in the forest
Sank earthward all asworn,
The green marsh-frogs that chorused
Had ta'en a sadder tune.

Lost loves and sins long hidden,
Through some unguarded gate,
Entered the soul unbidden
And made men desolate.

The
Hidden
Tide.

And fears beset the fearless,
And laughs were stayed to sigh,
And eyes long dry and tearless
Grew moist, and none knew why.

Gleamed red the covered ember
Beneath its ashen grey,
And some said, "I remember,"
And some, "'T was such a day!"

And all were lonely-hearted,
Sight inward-set and blurred,
At touch or tone they started
And groped for fitting word.

Down-cast in weeds went Nature,
Stillling man's mirth and song;
And mourning through every creature
A grave and ancient wrong . . .

Light fades on hill and hollow;
Night falls, and close behind
Storm-rage and Sea-wrath follow
With wild cries on the wind.

THE FISHER.

The
Hidden
Tide.



ALL night a noise of leaping fish
Went round the bay,
And up and down the shallow sands
Sang waters at their play.

The mangroves drooped on salty creeks,
And through the dark,
Making a pale patch in the deep,
Gleamed, as it swam, a shark.

In streaks and twists of sudden fire
Among the reeds
The bream went by, and where they passed
The bubbles shone like beads.

All night the full deep drinking-song
Of Nature stirred,
And nought beside, save leaping fish
And some forlorn night-bird.

No lost wind wandered down the hills
To tell of wide
Wild waterways; on velvet moved
The silky, sucking tide.

Deep down there sloped in shadowy mass
A giant hill,
And midway, mirrored in the tide,
The stars burned large and still.

The fisher, dreaming on the rocks,
Heard Nature say
Strange, secret things that no one hears
Upon the beaten way;

The
Hidden
Tide.

And whisperings and wonder stirred,
And hopes and fears,
And sadness touched his heart, and filled
His eyes with star-stained tears:

And so, thrilled through with joy and love
And sweet distress,
He stood entranced, enchained by her
Full-breasted loveliness.





DID you see a troop go by
Way-weary and oppressed,
Dead kisses on the drooping lip
And a dead heart in the breast?

*Yea, I have seen them one by one
Way-weary and oppressed,
And when I asked them, "Whither speed?"
They answered, "To the West!"*

And were they pale as pale could be—
Death pale with haunted eyes,
And did you see the hot white dust
Range round their feet and rise?

*O, they were pale as pale could be,
And pale as an embered leaf;
The hot white dust had risen, but
They laid it with their grief.*

Did no one say the way is long,
And crave a little rest?
*O no, they said, "The night is nigh,
Our camp is in the West!"*

And did pain pierce their feet, as though
The way with thorns were set,
And were they visited by strange
Dark angels of regret?

*O yea, and some were mute as death,
Though shot by many a dart,
With them the salt of inward tears
Went stinging through the heart.*

The
Hidden
Tide.

And how are these wayfarers called,
And whither do they wend?
The Weary-Hearted—and their road
At sunset hath an end.

Shed tears for them . . . *Nay, nay, no tears!*
They yearn for endless rest;
Perhaps large stars will burn above
Their camp within the West.



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A Personal Note.

Roderic Joseph Quinn was born at Sydney on 26th November, 1869, the sixth of a family of nine, all of whom are living. His two brothers have written verses, and those of one of them, a journalist and member of N.S.W. Parliament, display especial grace of sentiment and expression. Quinn's father and mother emigrated from Galway, Ireland, in 1855, and it is likely that the feeling of kinship with the Sea so evident in his verse and prose springs from hereditary memories of the wild western coast of the Green Isle. In his own fine phrase applied to another, "his soul has celled the music of the Sea, and salt is in his blood."

Quinn got his schooling in Sydney, and for a short time studied for the Bar, but when nearly twenty went himself to teach school at Milbrulong, a hamlet near Wagga, in the N.S.W. Riverina district. The school was a provisional one under Government, and when the teacher's annual salary was suddenly reduced from £84 to £70 Quinn resigned and returned to Sydney, after an absence of less than six months. Since 1890 he has supported himself by contributions to the Sydney press. His romance, "Mostyn Stayne," was published in 1897: his tales and sketches have not yet been collected in a volume.

When I was a boy and blew bubbles, happy to watch the iridescent globes that sailed shingly up and up, I had a more fortunate comrade who heard the bubbles *sing*. Each, he said, was accompanied by its own pale tune of pleasure or of sadness: with this one, gay and large and vehement, went a tiny chorus of rejoicing timbrels, fairies' timbrels, thrilling the strained ear with echoes of a tender and unimaginable delight; from that one dying yonder, scarce strong enough to snare a rainbow, there parted some ghost of the dim grief that Eden flowers moaned when Adam was outcast for ever. We were Sunday scholars then, and our similes were affectionately Scriptural.

My friend, alas! was but a weak bubble himself, and when not long after he faded beyond sight they told me that he too had died singing. I have often thought of his fancy: I think of it always when reading the verses of Roderic Quinn. For here surely are a Poet's bubbles, delicately mirthful, wistfully melancholy, shot with all the colours of his moods, reflecting all the images of his mind, blown by the breath of the Muse into a profound and secret sky whither only inner eye and ear may follow them, and as they rise shining, and singing, singing, singing as they shine.

A.G.S.

A ROSE OF REGRET



Portrait of
James Hebblethwaite



A Rose of Regret

James Hebblethwaite



Of the verses herein, Home, Provence, Perdita, The Sirens, The Quiet Life, Lament, Dead Island, Rejected, Dream-Echo, Wanderers, Spring, were printed in THE BULLETIN. The Silver Falls was printed in SCHOOL ECHOES, at the Friends' High School, Hobart. The Prefatory verses, Love in the Ruins, Ulysses, Strolling Players, The Children's Minuet, Life ("Commonplace"), The Forest, The Quest, were published in "Verse : by James Hebblethwaite, Hobart" (1896). A Night-Watch, Old Catalogues, One Memory, The Symbol, Longing, Old Authors, France, Passing, are now printed for the first time.





*Like the scent of violet,
Subtly sweet with all regret,
Love and Spring they pass away—
Ah me, well a-day!*

*Vesper-bell knells dying beam,
Form and feature fall to dream,
Gone the voice, the love of May—
Ah me, well a-day!*

*Sigh we for the sunlight fled,
Sigh we for the love that's dead,
Love and violet decay—
Ah me, well a-day!*



A Rose
of Regret.



HOME.

HE blue Pacific waves ran clear
In ridges to my feet,
And from their range, and from the
gums
Gushed odour keen and sweet.
Squat in the she-oak's golden flame,
The billy boiled too soon,
For all was golden drowsiness
That golden afternoon.

I fell asleep and saw myself
Within an ancient room
Of English grange, a white-haired man,
Lit by a ruddy gloom :
And in my heart a whisper went,
A sense of great release,
I knew that I was home again,
With life and death at peace.

The toil was over—God, how strange !
The tears were on my face—
I need not wander for my bread
From homeless place to place ;
But here a breathing space I had
Unknown to fate, my foe,
Before I went the outland way
That mortal men must go.

I looked around the panelled walls
And saw dim portraits there
Of noble knight and noble dame
And girlhood sweet and fair ;
And in old carven cabinets
Were letters, faded, sere,
With folded tresses, long dead flowers,
And mark of falling tear.

Old perfumes stirred before my hand,
Old heart-breaks bled anew ;

The pink was there, the daffodil,
And, for remembrance, rue ;
My spirit touched the unseen dead
Behind the written word,
The heart of sadness touched and wept,
And spirit weeping heard :

Grief for the unforgotten hours
Beyond recall for aye ;
Regret for lonely youth and love—
November tears in May :
A note of joy rose in the sound,
Of coming home at last,
My name was soft on waiting lips
Loved in the ancient past.

My spirit with her sense of rest
Behind the brightening veil,
Had pity on my body's grief,
For her made weak and pale ;
And as the winds grew to their pitch
Grappling like deadly foes,
She gave unto my mortal part
An hour of deep repose.

And by the winter fire I sat ;
Remembered faces came,
By love and death made wondrous sweet,
Of purest spirit flame :
The hour beside the ruin grey,
The kiss by summer night,
So beautiful, so sad, were seen
In delicate clear light.

Children, unborn, but passionate
With mournful loveliness,
Smiled through their tears, and she was there
Who did my long years bless ;
And all my simple pilgrim gold—
Old print with passing gleam

A Rose
of Regret.

On ivied tower, old summer walks
By haunted mount and stream . . .

The flame paled on the hollied crest
And on the mistletoe,
And something whispered in my heart
'T was time for me to go;
Aside my spirit, seraph-fresh,
Stood looking on the clay
Chastened for service of the soul,
Then turned toward the Day.

I woke; and to my dreaming eyes
The hour was as before;
But still I knew my life was changed,
Then and for evermore.
The wistful passion in my breast
Is not for earthly home,
But I must seek a City still
Wherever I may roam.



A NIGHT-WATCH.

A Rose
of Regret.



HE sallow autumn light, the evening red
Of dying hearth, a twilight sad and
lone
Made in my room ; and in a waking
sleep

I heard from out the heart of night a moan
And sighing whisper, calling me to keep
A vigil with the dead ;
And I remembered her who sleeps afar
In English earth beneath the shadowed green
Of yew and cypress, and what might have been
From lover sweet as eve and single star.

Again in deep of silent summer air
We trod the forest path, and in a mist
Of golden lights and shadows pouring down
On bed of dry and faded leaves we kist,
And on her head I placed a fragrant crown
Of flowers shy and rare,
And told her tales of knight and maid forlorn,
Of castle, haunted upland, fairy well,
And wistfully, fraught with the woodland spell,
We bent to listen for the magic horn.

Within that other thicket of black oak
And pensive streaming crimson, azure, white,
The simple country chapel, hand in hand,
We knelt in stillness, while the closing night
And tinkle of quaint bell, drew in a band
Of quiet rustic folk
Along the aisles dark with the mortal fate
Of bygone men and women shut in stone,
Whose sad old partings in dim lines made moan
Beneath rich heraldries and crumbling state.

O sweeter far than branch of almond bloom,
With pathos laden as of ancient song,

A Rose
of Regret.

Or April's angel-blue, or liliated way,
Or maiden of the legend of earth's throng,
I heard thy whisper ; and when Time shall stay
His immemorial loom,
Sad labour done, in love we still shall dwell,
Nor in eternal gleam and light forget,
Remembered then without the old regret,
Our field of meeting by the leafy well.



PROVENCE.

In old Provence I long to stray
All for the old love's sake,
For there in far-off times a lay
To minstrel harp at close of day,
I sang beside the lake.

Sad in the summer twilight air—
O dusk of summer eves !
Around sat knight and lady fair :
I saw them not, for you were there,
My love, beneath the leaves.



HE moaning winds are out upon the sea,
The wild white horses plunge to
dragon foam,
Close in the bush a ringed and withered
tree

Falls with a crash, and I ride swiftly home,
Where one is waiting by the she-oak flame
To catch the rider's *Coo-ee* ! and her name.

The supper over and the table clear,
With glowing heart and lamp and easy chair
And bundle of old catalogues, I hear
The roar of sea and wind without a care,
And sink into the past with still delight
And in remembrances forget the night.

Pale beams of eve now light the Dreamland ways :
My feet tread without echo on the green
Of vanished England : Clive and Ethel gaze
Sad for lost years of love that might have been ;
While Esmond and his mistress bring again
Their sheaves with laughter and a tearful rain.

Once more the Vernon lighted by the moon
Leans to young Frank ; again the simple flute
Of Bertram wakes "The links of bonnie Doon "
From wayside well ; and those wild notes long mute
In deep old glades of noble Sherwood rise
In yearning music as the king's deer dies.

What hosts of poignant memories are here !
What well-loved faces glimmer in the dark !
What hints of love from eyes and lips so dear ! . . .
Ah, me ! I take my pencil and I mark
The catalogues, lest from my eyes the tears
Should spring at thought of all the dead old years.

A Rose
of Regret.

On monumental effigies I gloat,
On castle, abbey, mansion, and grey peel,
On secret panel, stairway, and deep moat,
On antique vestiges: again I feel
The joy of walking tours in youth and May
By lonely peaceful stream and ruin grey.

And then the bindings! purple, green, and blue,
Old Spanish red, buff, citron, violet, white,
Dark crimson, orange—all as fresh as new!
Pale, polished, panelled, full, rich, crushed, and bright,
With laureate wreath, curled dolphin, golden bee,
Stamped Tudor roses, crown, and fleur-de-lis.

What talk of watered silk and India proofs,
Large paper, type, and edge uncut of blade,
Of black and Gothic letters, and the roofs
Whence came these treasures! All things fade,
And books are no exceptions; some are worn,
The last leaf wormed, discoloured, stained, or torn.

LOVE IN THE RUINS.

Faint winds are sadly sighing
Within the ruined shrine,
The rose of day is dying
To twilight in the vine.

On bluest ether glowing,
Above a cold green steep,
A trembling star is sowing
The seeds of folding sleep.

With tender shadows teeming
The eve floats from above,
And youth and maid are dreaming
A wistful, wild sweet love.



HE wise Ulysses stands upon the stair,
His wave-worn raft sways idly at his
feet ;
To lift the drooping sail there blows no
air,

And all around is stillness, save the beat
Of faintest ripples that make cool the heat
With cool-lipped sound, and on the ocean floor
Of weed-grown rock flit golden shadows fleet,
And in the light blown murmurs evermore
Ulysses hears a dirge from happy days of yore.

For not on yellow sand is fixed his glance,
Nor yet on foreland with its temple white,
Nor where the hills their terraces advance,
But where, cut from pure amethystine light,
Two islands rise from water sun-grey bright
And guard the ocean gate and wandering way
To Circe's island, and he feels the might
Of passion's sweet remembrance of their play
Within the myrtle grove from gleaming day to day.

He sees the grey and windless olive woods
Upon the smooth green shoulder of the hill ;
He hears the tumbling of the rough green floods
That smite the shore and all the pebbles thrill
With glad swift motion in the seething mill ;
But salt-green surge, green sward, and olive tree,
Grow dreamlike, and his eyelids slowly fill,
And fainter falls the rumour of the sea,
For memory's lingering voice now names Penelope.

Penelope ! the tears run down his face,
His ancient love reproves false Circe's wrong,
He sees Penelope in all her grace
E'en as he saw her 'mid her maiden throng
Before the war had made him but a song

A Rose
of Regret.

Upon the tongues of men, and at the sweep
Of his remembered love he springs along
The swarded slope to where upon the steep
The white-walled city stands locked in a quiet sleep.

O hush! speak not! but list that silvery sound
Of flutes, and pipes, and merry clashing din,
And cry of sweet clear voices, floating round
The temple's porch—O, can it be a sin
To think Apollo and his shining kin
Have left the glittering mount? In coloured weeds
They slowly loiter past where keen and thin
The hot light cleaves the ebon shade . . . Who leads
This train of tender youth fresh from the flowery meads?

Faint haunting winds of silvan sweetness breathe,
The dews of morn about their garments cling,
And round their shining heads fresh flowers they wreath,
And scatter buds from arks the children bring,
And move, at times, in slow and charmed ring
To sacred song—then on again they roam,
Ulysses of their band, and clearly sing
In ravished harmony: *Ah, Spring's white foam!*
Ah, leave the house of stone, the sweet earth is your
home!

ONE MEMORY.

They carried you when dead with dirge and tears
To virgin tomb within the sacred hill,
And carved sweet mourning Greek and raying spears
Of early dawn: I, too, the bubbling rill,
My sheep and ivy crown, left for the still
Lone slumber. Love! O may we not have met
In after-wakings, and the gurgled trill
Of nightingales heard 'neath the forest net
Of moonlight-haunted leaves, but now we do forget!

PERDITA.

A Rose
of Regret.



THE sea coast of Bohemia
Is pleasant to the view
When singing larks spring from the
grass
To fade into the blue,
And all the hawthorn hedges break
In wreaths of purest snow,
And yellow daffodils are out,
And roses half in blow.

The sea coast of Bohemia
Is sad as sad can be,
The prince has ta'en our flower of maids
Across the violet sea ;
Our Perdita has gone with him,
No more we dance the round
Upon the green in joyous play,
Or wake the tabor's sound.

The sea coast of Bohemia
Has many wonders seen,
The shepherd lass wed with a king,
The shepherd with a queen ;
But such a wonder as my love
Was never seen before,
It is my joy and sorrow now
To love her evermore.

The sea coast of Bohemia
Is haunted by a light
Of memory of lady's eyes,
And fame of gallant knight ;
The princes seek its charmed strand,
But, ah, it was our knell
When o'er the sea our Perdita
Went with young Florizel !

A Rose
of Regret.

The sea coast of Bohemia
Is not my resting place,
For with her waned from out the day
A beauty and a grace :
O had I kissed her on the lips
I would no longer weep,
But live by that until the day
I fall to shade and sleep.



THE SIRENS.

The sirens are singing
Sweeter than music of lute,
Or harp of mortal stringing ;
And the angels are mute.

O desolate sadness !
O notes elusive and vain !
Ecstasy touched to madness :
Deepness of yearning pain.

THE SYMBOL.

A Rose
of Regret.



HUS pass the glories of the world !
He lies beneath the pall's white folds ;
His sword is sheathed, the flag is furled,
Him silence holds.

The pilgrim staff, the cockle-shell,
The crown and sceptre of his pride,
The simple flower from forest dell,
Heap at his side.

And add thereto the wild-heart lute,
The voice of love and twilight song :
Those passioned strings, though he is mute,
Remember long.

And move not hence his evening book,
The sifted gains of calm and storm ;
And bow before that dust-strewn nook
And silent form.

To-morrow hath no hope for him,
No clasp of friend, no grip of foe :
Remember, love, with eyes tear-dim,
We too must go !

STROLLING PLAYERS.

Spangles and gold ! O spangles and gold !
The hero slim and the baron bold,
The budding charms of the virtuous maid,
The dungeon keep and the forest glade,
The broadsword fight and the stilted talk,
The villain's mask and the stagey walk,
The mingled breath of sawdust and tan,
The dewy morn and the travelling van . . .
O, once romance in the blood is rife
We are strolling players throughout this life !

THE QUIET LIFE.

Marion Bay.



ISLAND of the South, the old sweet
South,
Beneath thy airy dome benign and
blue
Why should I pluck the melancholy
rue

Of wan remembrance, and with wistful mouth
Breathe soft the old adieu?

I have an image of my place of birth,
So pure, so sad, so full of antique sound
And reverie, its once great passions bound
In cloistral peace, that nowhere on this earth
Can that fair land be found.

Then, O my soul, in still content live here
Beside the beach remote and long green wave
Where nothing breaks the golden silence save
The roaring fall, and lingering year by year
Approach the quiet grave.

The pages of Life's book read in the grass!
See in the far-off time the wondering boy
With careful fingers touch the treasured toy;
His life is wrapt in thine, with thine will pass—
O pang of subtle joy!

As monk that tells in veiled religious place
His holy beads, I lift the yellow leaves
And let them softly fall while fancy weaves
Their charms again—ah, moments full of grace,
My breast with sorrow heaves!

The mother's and the father's tender tones,
The sister's walk in scented hawthorn lanes,
The old, old songs with plaintive old refrains.
The valentines and tokens with old moans
And faded dear disdains:

These, and dim twilight hedge and evening bells
Across the river, cowslips dewy wet,
And huge old gnarly roots in fern fronds set,
Cool primroses, and purple heathery fells,
Are precious symbols yet.

And I remember how I longed to lie
In scarlet coat and sash in still repose
'Mid victor dead, while grand sad music rose
And measured volleys : sweet it seemed to die
For such harmonious close.

O love! O dew of youth clear, undefiled!
O violet of life! O azure light!
O dawn that holds the sweetness of the night!
O floating odour haunting, vague, and wild!
Again I feel thy might.

What dreams of beauty filled the college day,
What passioned pleading from the classic page,
Naked and death-refined, went with our age,
What friendships on the lawns, the world away—
Peace and the Avon mage.

Is it not pitiful that life should dim
The splendour of our visions, mar the face
With anguished thought, and make an austere space
Beyond the morning? Well, 'tis evening hymn,
And on the shore I pace.

And I have wife for love and bosom talk,
And ancient friendships, dear companion books,
And chosen pictures, ever-green old nooks,
And to God infinite in sunset walk
I lift my grateful looks.



ELLEN, when the sunset glow
Lies soft on land and sea,
Steal to our trysting garden gate,
And gently think of me.

Remember how we could not speak,
We were so full of bliss,
You closed your eyes as you held up
Your lips for my fond kiss.

That summer time of youth and love !
The quiet sunny room !
We loved and longed for half a day
Till twilight's rosy gloom.

Your frock was white with lilac sprigs,
Your hair came tumbling down,
I kissed your cheeks and lips so red,
Your eyes of bonny brown.

We sat together and our words
Were broken, sweet, and few :
We did not dream the tears we shed
Were for a last adieu.

OLD AUTHORS.

A simple beauty Time shall not corrode
Dwells with such titles as Lamb's Elia,
Gray's Elegy, and Collins' Evening Ode,
And Walton's Angler : like a touch of May
In yellow Autumn, these old dreamers move
Our hearts with tender peace and wistful love.

THE CHILDREN'S MINUET.

A Rose
of Regret.



H! ah! this is our holiday,
Trip it with laughter again,
Then gracefully bending in mode that
is olden
We 'll dance to the minuet's strain.

Slow! slow! silent and courteous—
White satin and powder and rose;
And sad the refrain that floats dreamily over
Sweet maidens and stately young beaux.

See! see! just for a moment
The old world is with you again,
And now they have vanished and we are but children
That dance to the minuet's strain.



LAMENT.

Love that brings the laughing tears
Of an April day,
Comes but once in all our years,
Comes but once for aye.

Roses shadow forth fair hue,
Violets sweet breath,
Lilies hint of form so true,
Marigolds of death.

DEAD ISLAND :

Port Arthur.



T is the hour of sunset ; on the hills
A rose-light slumbers ; in the quiet
west,
Deep in its heart, soft splendours roll and
run,

And twilight falls upon the dead who rest
So thick beneath my feet. Farewell, O Sun !

The far blue heaven fills
With starry lamps ; an echo of the roar
Of distant wave adds to the solitude
Where, heaped together, gentle, fierce, and rude
The trumpet wait on this forgetful shore.

O sombre island grave ! among thy shades
I stand on guard, the living with the dead,
And sadness infinite swells in my breast
For all man's generations that have fled
The lonely earth on which they found no rest :
Here as the slow light fades
How strange seems life ! We love, we strive, we hate,
We weep and passion ; grayer grows the day ;
And one by one, friends, foemen, steal away ;
And Death and Time in silence close the gate.



REJECTED.

A Rose
of Regret.



ND all is over ! Now I know my fate,
Or know in part, for through my brain
there strays
A wild sweet melody of other days
That will not come to call . . . I came
too late
To walk in Eden ways.

But dreaming I have seen their tender blue,
The darkening field and honeysuckle lane
Rich with deep perfume of the summer rain ;
And with shy rapture, hand in hand with you,
Have heard the night-bird's pain.

And I have known in vision clear, divine,
An ancient home with green and shadowy bound,
Where you were queen, and children clustered round,
And all that beauty, sweetness, love were mine,
And all that haunted ground ;

And, as the days shut in and we grew old,
The quiet talk of long November eves
By glowing hearth or through the fallen leaves—
The sacred ending of a tale nigh told . . .
Ah, now your bosom heaves !

You bend your head to hide the sudden tears
Until I feel your cheek's soft scented glow,
And I may kiss your lips, you whisper low—
The first and last for never-ending years !
Well, let me kiss and go.

And yet I cannot touch your lips ! Again
That tune swells in my heart with agony,
“ *When other lips* ”—I know it now, you see—
“ *When other lips* ”—O aching old refrain !
“ *Then you 'll remember me.* ”

A Rose
of Regret.

Ah, no! forget me quite, or think me dead,
Let never thought of me make sad your days;
That I have known you fills my soul with praise;
With your sweet memory again I'll tread
The old forsaken ways.



DREAM-ECHO.

I love the Morning Star—
O love pure and tender!
In Dreamland very far
She dwelleth in splendour.

Her bosom hath a spell
For cooling, for healing;
Her beauty is a well
Of mystic revealing.

The flowers on a bier
Have some of her sweetness,
And the leaves that grow sere
In Autumn's winged fleetness.

LIFE.

A Rose of Regret.



NEW day is here :

Give the past no tear,
The future no fear.

For but little hope ;
With thy passion cope—
Be Kaiser and Pope.

Is not the way straight ?
Then limit thy fate ;
Thy powers concentrate.

In solitude bring
Thy great thoughts to wing—
The Gloria sing.

Let no faulty trace
Of life's hurried race
Mar perfection's grace.

Place thyself in line
With the Power divine :
Pure joy will be thine.

Our powers are too large
Life's dues to discharge :
They pass the dim marge.





H, France! thou wast a playground for
our men
Till from the forest hills of fair
Lorraine
Came forth the Maid—I, of the English
blood,

Hold her the mightiest dead save One, and fain
To see her sepulchre would cross the flood—

Yet, France, we met again!
Thy trampling armies singing martial airs
Poured over Europe in a splendid tide:
Forgive us when we think, with island pride,
It broke in vain round Waterloo's red squares.

But rolling smoke, torn flag, and glittering steel,
Go not with quiet: let me brush the dew
Of sweet old silent courts, or help to make
A dainty memoir, or in silvery blue
Ride with our Musketeers, or for the sake
Of Esmeralda kneel
In pillared gloom of Notre Dame, or late
Sing student songs in goblin streets, or pass
Long hours of reading on the turfy grass . . .
O classic style, so purged and delicate!

THE FOREST.

Once as I lay asleeping
Beneath an ancient oak,
There stole to me a maiden,
One of the silvan folk.

Pale-sweet her face as moonbeam
That through the forest slips—
Between her hair's twin darkness
She kissed my dreaming lips.

THE SILVER FALLS.

A Rose
of Regret.



ENEATH the fern-tree's plumes I sat ;
The waters hardly stirred,
And in their lapsing, tinkling flow,
A low-toned voice I heard.

It sang the cool green silentness
Of far shy leafy dell,
The beauty mirrored in the heart
Of light-stained, deep-mossed well :

The springs that brimming fled adown
The rugged mountain side,
Where one might drink a sunbeam up
Within the crystal tide :

And then the voyage perilous
The Sinbad of a leaf
Would make upon its foamy rush
And o'er the stormy reef :

Of terrors in the tangled roots,
Of golden pebbled beach,
Of drifting dreams of laziness
Along the slanting reach.

And then, anon, grown garrulous,
From wave-worn stony lip,
Of amber wine of Nature's brew
It offered me a sip . . .

A muttering blast crept through the trees—
It took an organ-tone
And told of wild-wood clamourings
And winds that sob and moan.

This unseen spirit of the falls
Spun in my trembling heart
A dream—so wistful, delicate !
For hour and place apart.



AS I rode in the early dawn,
While stars were fading white,
I saw upon a grassy slope
A camp-fire burning bright;
With tent behind and blaze before,
Three loggers in a row
Sang all together joyously—
Pull up the stakes and go!

As I rode on by Eagle Hawk,
The wide blue deep of air,
The wind among the glittering leaves,
The flowers so sweet and fair,
The thunder of the rude salt waves,
The creek's soft overflow,
All joined in chorus to the words—
Pull up the stakes and go!

Now by the tent on forest skirt,
By odour of the earth,
By sight and scent of morning smoke,
By evening camp-fire's mirth,
By deep-sea call and foaming green,
By new stars' gleam and glow,
By summer trails in antique lands—
Pull up the stakes and go!

The world is wide, and we are young,
And sounding marches beat,
And passion pipes her sweetest call
In lane, and field, and street;
So rouse the chorus, brothers all,
We 'll something have to show
When Death comes round and strikes our tent—
Pull up the stakes and go!

SPRING.

A Rose
of Regret.



MY heart ! O wild heart ! the voice of
Spring is calling,
Shaking out the blossoms her
herald wind flies :
Wake from thy wintering, awake !
her light is falling,
Flashing and a-trembling from blue-hearted skies.

I will arise and go, the heath's light bells are ringing,
Powdered with flower-dust the bees softly hum ;
I will arise and go, a glad wild bird is singing,
Jo-jo-jo-wikee ! . . . ah, the scent of that gum !

Veining the gum's white stem is gold of God's refining,
And round its bareness the bark-string rustling sways ;
Lofty spires of fresh young leaves twinkle in the shining,
Keen and warm the scent flows down the bushland
ways.

Yellow as the wavelets from dawn's brimmed fountain
streaming,
The light of the wattle is Spring's robing hue :
Heavy with its perfume she stands in mystic dreaming,
Pearled with clear delicate seeds of rainbow dew.

While through the leagues of bush we hear the soft wind
blowing,
Go we forth to meet her, delight in our eyes :
Veiled in glory she stands . . . Ah, whence these wild
tears flowing,
This ache of the lonely heart, these yearning sighs !



ACRED bell at eventide,
Calling, calling, far and wide,
Ah, so sweet and low :
Sweet and sad as autumn light,
Low and sweet as closing night . . .
Pilgrim, let us go.

Youth and beauty far away,
Lean together in the may,
Shining head to head ;
But for us the solemn peace,
(Do not sigh) and great release
Of the happy dead.

Come, as children, steal to Him
Who through all the ages dim
Offers sweet relief :
Stricken heart so fierce and wild,
Come, as comes a little child,
With thy wasting grief.

Far above the creeds he stands
With His pierced and pitying hands
Stretched to thee and me ;
He is love's last tender bed,
Bosom for the weary head
To eternity.



THE QUEST.

A Rose
of Regret.



OME leave your fading joys!
Why play with childhood's toys,
When hearts are old?
Your tired yearnings bring
To-day's eternal Spring
In manger cold.

Not here the Holy Child,
With Virgin mother mild,
And shining light:
Naught save the perfume dense
Of myrrh and frankincense,
With jewels bright.

There where the pure winds blow
From peaks of ancient snow
He may be found:
For on the mountain side
In prayer He oft did bide
Bowed to the ground.

Though chaste the world on high,
Ceiled with the dark blue sky,
And lamped with stars,
He wanders not where light
Breaks through the forest night
In silver bars.

Then by His bloody sweat
He may be traced yet
To olive bower;
Where from those drops of blood
Love blows within the wood
A perfect flower.

Lone stand the olive trees,
Of sighs and memories
The records dim;

**A Rose
of Regret.**

And of that vigil dread
They may be questioned,
But not of Him.

O lift your weeping eyes
To where your Saviour dies
Upon the cross !
Yea, though we know our gain,
Still must we mourn in pain
Our bitter loss.

Ah no, we see not there
Sad face 'mid drooping hair,
And streaming side—
The thorny garland blows
Into the living rose
For heavenly bride.

O Christ, where shall we meet ?
When kiss thy beauteous feet ?
O hear our cry !
Lost is the half-won fight,
We reel into the night,
We faint and die.

List to the still small voice
Which makes the soul rejoice
Amid its pain :
It whispers in the breast,
Seek Me and leave the rest—
All else is vain.

Behold my Burning Heart ;
Come thou with Me apart
And kindle Love :
Where Love is there am I,
Love lifts the soul on high
To heaven above.

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A Personal Note.

James Hebblethwaite was born at Preston, England, in 1857—to love peace and ensue it. His youth came under dominion of an old library in a green bird-haunted square; and the lofty timbered roof, the huge stone fireplace with its winter glow upon long dark Georgian portraits, the time-stained books rich in engravings of a quaint and vanished England,—these were among the sources of his life. He entered with a scholarship St. John's College, Battersea, London; and remained two years (1877-8), spending his holidays on the Thames, or in Westminster Abbey, or in rambles after Lamb and Dickens through the never-ending streets. For twelve years thereafter he was teaching, and he lectured on English literature at the Harris Institute, Preston. Later he came to Tasmania, and after employment at schools in Hobart entered the Congregational ministry. He is now principal of Queen's College, Latrobe, Tas. A booklet of his verses, published in 1896 by *The Hobart Mercury*, is basis of the present collection.

James Hebblethwaite's verses are the poetical expression of a gentle scholar's soul. From the fever of our time he is healed by the books he befriends; and in his lappel of regret he wears, not a snowdrop, but a rose. Loving Nature with the pious delight of Izaak Walton, he writes of God with the simple devotion of George Herbert. His doubts are too dim for utterance, but he voices hope too faint for endeavour. Shadowed with melancholy, he breathes quiet joy.

A.G.S.



THE CIRCLING HEARTHS



The Circling Hearths

Roderic Quinn 



*With the exception of A Caress, which appeared in THE AUSTRALIAN
MAGAZINE, these verses were first printed in THE BULLETIN.*

TO THE COMMONWEALTH

THE CIRCLING HEARTHS.

The Circling Hearths.



Y Countrymen, though we are young as yet
With little history, nought to show
Of lives enleagu'd against a foreign foe,
Torn flags and triumph, glory or regret ;
Still some things make our kinship sweet,
Some deeds inglorious but of royal worth,
As when with tireless arms and toiling feet
We felled the tree and tilled the earth.

'T is no great way that we have travelled since
Our feet first shook the storied dust
Of England from them, when with love and trust
In one another, and large confidence
In God above, our ways were ta'en
'Neath alien skies—each keeping step in mind
And soul and purpose to one trumpet strain,
One urging music on the wind :

Yet tears of ours have wet the dust, have wooed
Some subtle green things from the ground—
Like violets—only violets never wound
Such tendrils round the heart : the solitude
Has seen young hearts with love entwine ;
And many gentle friends gone down to death
Have mingled with the dust, and made divine
The very soil we tread beneath.

Thus we have learned to love our country, learned
To treasure every inch from foam
To foam ; to title her with name of Home ;
To light in her regard a flame that burned
No land in vain, that calls the eyes
Of men to glory heights and old renown ;
That wild winds cannot quench, nor thunder-skies
Make dim, nor many waters drown.

The
Circling
Hearths.

Six hearths are circled round our shores, and round
The six hearths group a common race,
Though leagues divide, the one light on their face :
The same old songs and stories rise ; the sound
Of kindred voices and the dear
Old English tongue make music ; and men move
From hearth to hearth with little fear
Of aught, save open arms and love.

To keep these hearth-fires red, to keep the door
Of each house wide—that is our part :
Surely 't is noble ! Surely heart to heart,
God's love upon us and one goal before,
Is something worth ; something to win
Our hearts to effort ; something it were good
To garner soon ; and something 't would be sin
To cast aside in wanton mood.

My Countrymen, hats off ! with heart and will
Thank God that you are free, and then
Arise and don your nationhood like men,
And manlike face the world for good or ill.
Peace be to you, and in the tide
Of years great plenty till Time's course be run :
Six Ploughmen in the same field side by side,
But, if need be, six Swords as one.

LOVE'S LEGACY.

The
Circling
Hearths.



HE light upon her cheek
Is nearing its eclipse,
The lips whereof you speak
Are not for lovers' lips.

The wherefore and the why
Make men and maidens weep ;
Gold lights of hair and eye
Grey grow in endless sleep.

A flower is she indeed,
A lily-chalice pale,
But evil was the seed
Whence sprung a growth so frail.

The debts we pile to-day
They pay in ceaseless tears—
With streaming eyes they pay
The score in after-years.

Who should not meet have met.
They sin—the world rolls on !
Dust all except the debt :
Who pays ? She dies anon.



I SHALL REMEMBER.



TELL me what potent amulet you held,
The year ago,
When arm-in-arm we walked
The noisy streets, where harsh-voiced life
repelled
The rosy glow
Of that whereof we talked.

For thus it was I saw no one but you,
And heard your kind
Words only in the crowd:
Friends whom I met (I have some friends, a few)
Said I was blind,
Or grown remote and proud.

They knew not what I felt—the lack of pain,
The peace that brought
Good tidings to my heart;
Their faces, far and foreign, stirred again
The morrow-thought—
The hour when we might part!

Tell me, for you had sense to hear and view—
The woman-sense
That nothing may evade—
Did not a glow of roses redden through
And make intense
The street-length where we strayed?

Or was it that the sunset played the rose
And touched the street,
The hour, the faces pale,
To kinship with the sacred mood that glows
When lovers meet
And thrill to tell their tale?

Yet sunset was it not, else how had I—

I, all in love—

Found roses on the air,

A perfume come with colour 'neath the sky

As though to prove

A reign of roses there?

Ah, mood of old ! associate with flowers,

With violet,

Rose-scent, rose-hue and youth :

It seemed my soul had gathered other powers,

And, loveward set,

Found fairer things than truth.

The twilight faded and the night came down,

And all the hum

And hurry sank and ceased ;

And every window in the waiting town,

Where all was dumb,

Seemed turned upon the East . . .

There came a silver sweetness, swift and soon

Along the sky—

A slowly swelling flood ;

And then the even forehead of the moon,

That rising high

Seemed flushed with new-spilt blood.

Moon-mingled melodies began to rise—

A beauty twin

To beauty born of light :

With spirit-surgings stress of sobs and sighs

A violin

Made outcry in the night.

You stayed me with a touch ; we ceased to move .

Ah, what divine

And sad foreknowledge made
Your soul grow dark with fear? I said, "O love,
O love of mine —
Be not, be not afraid!"

You stood a moment with white fingers twined,
And then your cry,
In vague, veiled words—that ours
Was passion of the old and tragic kind,
Foredoomed to die—
Turned dark the moonlit hours.

I did not laugh ; I had no heart for mirth,
No merry scorn
To turn aside your pain ;
A debt uncanceled waited you on earth
Ere you were born,
And . . . all the rest is vain.

O love, when gentle things have made you wise,
And wonder meets
Your gaze in other spheres,
I think that I shall never set my eyes
On moonlit streets,
And keep them clear of tears.

And if a lonely violin should grace
Some night with charm,
And lift my soul above,
A sideway glance may show a shadowed face,
And, on my arm,
The girl I used to love !

DERELICT.

The
Circling
Hearths.



AM the foolish artist,
Far-fallen from the height
Where winged gifts up-bore me,
When life was young with light.

I am the foolish artist
(Drugged brain and rolling gait) ;
Men choke desire within them
And profit by my fate.

They stay me in the byways
(High morals make them bold) ;
I seem to drink their sermons ;
I drink instead their gold.

But such as seal their purses,
The word-free, miser tribe,
I flay with whips of satire,
And stab with goodly jibe.

Along the hard, black pavement,
When, lost to woe and weal,
The Loved-of-God lie dreaming—
I, God-abandoned, reel.

At times, when sleep eludes them,
They hear my footsteps roll—
“ What ails the foolish artist
That he drowns thus his soul ! ”

I knocked at the gate of Glory,
And straight it opened wide :
A whisper wooed me earthward,
Or I had stood inside.

I knocked at the Heart of Woman ;
Knocked with me boor and lout ;

The
Circling
Hearths.

"Come open, O Heart of Woman!
An artist stands without."

But chill on my soul fell answer,
As though a cold wind blew,
"Go hence, you foolish artist!
Here is no room for you."

Since when a foolish artist,
Long lost to dreams divine,
Hath ta'en the way of folly
And bowed his knee to wine.

Lights out! the clock is striking:
Lights out! and out o' luck;
Last stroke!—and the green tide gurgles;
Lights out! . . . And the Hour has struck.



IRONY.

The
Circling
Hearts.



ALL night a great wind blew across the land,
Come fresh from wild and salty seas,
With many voices loud and low
Appealing to the sympathies
Of those with whom long, long ago
It had been friends, but who
Had lost the way to know and understand
Its weird and tearless woe.

A sleeper, drawn from ancient fancies, stirred,
And strangely breathed in deep unrest
As though his heart were choked with grief;
The moon down-stealing in the west
Threw every move of limb and leaf
Upon his blind. Now this
Was he the wind sought wildly, had he heard—
Alas, the friend was deaf!

All time a great Thought wandered round the world
Naked and breathing loveliness,
Seeking in alien souls a home
And thwarted, yet a-seek no less
At every door, till forced to roam
A wonder unexpressed:
A sense of strangeness as of wings unfurled
Hovered at times o'er some.

He heard the knocking at the inner door;
He saw her face a light intense
And stood amazed, irresolute.
"Now, thou who hast the poet-sense
In song serene and absolute
Proclaim my hidden worth!"
He sobbed; she drooped her wings . . . Woe ever-
more!
The chosen mind was mute.

A CARESS.



said, "The Sea is royal blue,"
She opened her large eyes;
"It wins away my heart from you,"
She answered me with sighs.

I said, "The Sea has snow-white sands
That glance and gleam like silk,"
She opened her two pretty hands
And they were white as milk.

I said, "The Sea hides many pearls
Red coral caverns in,"
She laughed the laugh of merry girls
To show the pearls within.

I said that many moods abide
Beneath the velvet Sea,
She drooped her blue-veined lids to hide
A truant thought from me.

I said, "The Sea has winsome wiles
And singeth, 'Come to me!'"
She wreathed her rosebud mouth in smiles
And turned as if to flee.

I caught her so—"The Sea's caress
Gives Death or deadly strife;
But yours, my love—now, by this kiss
Your lips, my love, are Life!"



ALL day the Spring stood knocking at his
heart,
Crying, "Come out, thou laggard! and
behold
The lovely things that I have done upon
the earth;
Come out! come out! secluded and apart
Thou canst not see my lights of green and
gold;
Nor bless thine eyes with flowers, nor mix
thy woe with mirth."

All day the Spring stood knocking, and he heard
The shouts of children questing after flowers,
The joy they raised when some new loveliness was met,
Some richest splash of light on bush or bird;
But he was silent—unto him the hours
Brought grave and pensive gifts, dead leaves and old regret.

"What ails thee?" said the Spring, "long have I stood
A plea on these red lips, wocsome as wine;
A plea of mingled smiles and tears—thy feet to urge
To my desire: what ails thine ice-bound blood
That my breath brings no sweet and genial sign
Of thaw, no frank upleaping, and full, crimson surge?"

If it be Death—go thou among the tombs!
There shalt thou meet peace, deep and rare;
The Dead are not forgot: the Dead are with the flowers;
The Under-Earth, with many secret looms,
In silence weaves green band and golden square
From hearts long gone to dust,—sun-rays and shining showers.

"If it be Love, lo, listen!" said the Spring—
"Arm linked in arm they pace the old-time way;

His mouth is hot-athirst ; her lips are young and sweet ;
(Howe'er the blossom bend the bee will cling)
And there in green seclusion, as they sway,
Conceded sweetness steals the motion from his feet.

"It is the time of colour—art thou blind ?
Of honeydew—hast thou no lips to taste ?
Of singing mouth and throat—of coral and of pearls :
It is the time of quickening heart and mind :
Then up, thou laggard ! and come forth in haste,
And round and round the roses chase the laughing girls."

In vain ! in vain ! the Spring hath gone away :
She knocked so long that she grew tired at last.
What lay within she did not know (how could she know ?)
With life and loveliness her commerce lay :
Her eyes turned forward could not see the Past,
The bright love brought to death one Springtime long ago.

At that heart-door all Springs shall knock in vain :
No man's heart is it, but a tomb of love,
Wherein Love sank when only half his course was run ;
His beauty brought to nought, untimely slain,
As when with rolling smoke, slow borne above,
Goes out in middle sky a suffocated sun.





LEAVES and brambles from hill and hollow,
Come and gather!" the children cried;
"The sun goes down, and the night will
follow,
A moonless night on the dark hillside."

All ways they wandered—the dry twigs snapping,
With laugh and prattle and song between;
Down on the rocks the waves were lapping,
The sweet swell swaying the seaweed green.

And she stood by in her white sun-bonnet,
All lace and snow on her tressy hair,
With a gold king-beetle dreaming on it
A lotus dream in the lustrous air.

Was it love, or a dove in the tall tree cooing?
Was it love, or a dove that loitered nigh?
The eventide is the hour for wooing,
But I was silent and she was shy.

Then suddenly rose a far faint humming—
A growing noise in the evening hush,
And the talk of children homeward coming,
Laden with spoil of the gold-brown bush.

"Leaves and brambles from hill and hollow!
The way was tangled and tangles tire.
The sun goes down and the night will follow,—
Now down on your knees and make us a fire!"

The leaves were wet (how a storm may hinder!)
The brambles damp with a shower at noon;
She bent to help . . . and my heart of tinder,
Ah, why did it burst to flame so soon!

The
Circling
Hearths.

"Dry leaves, dry leaves from the twilight forest,
Or bark that is sheltered, or hidden ferns:
Dry leaves, dry leaves!" the children chorused,
"And the drier the leaf the redder it burns!"

The fire leapt up with a sudden glancing,
The first flame flushing her hands of snow;
And round about went the children dancing,
Their faces lit by the rosy glow.

That fire has gone beyond all returning,
For wild winds scatter and chill rains drench:
All dust the leaves; but a fire is burning
That wind or water shall never quench.

Ah, leaves and brambles from hill and hollow!
And two together, and violet eyes . . .
The sun goes down, and love must follow,
A quenchless fire and a flame that dies.



THE CRAFT OF BLUE.

The
Circling
Hearths.



YES alight and young gold hair,
Dimpled chin and cherry-red lip!
Little pink-fisted mariner,
A-rock and a-rock in your cradle ship,
Where do you think you're sailing to?
"Goo," the mariner says, and "Goo,
Goo, Goo, Goo," with a merry lip,
A-rock and a-rock in her cradle ship.

O, the seas are calm and blue
And the skies with light aglow,
Down in the land of Goo, Goo, Goo,
Where the baby captains go;
A cradle fleet's upon the sea
Sailing on with gurgling glee,
By Isles of Nod and Lands of Rest
North by South and East by West.

But at times! at times! at times!
(Still your sobs and dry your eyes)
And ('tis best) forget the rhymes,
Baby rhymes that cling and rise,
A small blue craft with gilding sweet
Winds slowly through the cradle fleet,
And all the babies cry "Goo, Goo,"
But that's not the port it's sailing to.

Why did she leave her cradle ship
All for the sake of a craft of blue?
Who stole the red from the baby's lip,
Stillling her song of "Goo, Goo, Goo?"
Only this: She danced her curls,
Said, "I've heard of a Land of Pearls,
And I'll steer my cradle North by South
And get some pretties to put in my mouth."

**The
Circling
Hearts.**

She set a-sail on a perilous main,
East by West and North by South,
'Mid Sleepless Straits and Isles of Pain,
And strong Thirst Winds that scourged her mouth,
And dank sick dewes that deadened her curls,
Till she came at last to the Land of Pearls
And took two tiny ones—only two—
When her cradle gave place to a craft of blue.





P in the dome of the drooping myrtle
 Small birds were wooing, trilling and
 twittering;
 Now and then one of them catching the
 sun on him
 Went through the leaves with a sudden
 gold glittering.
 And standing under there
 These the birds' words to me:
 "What do you ponder there
 Under our myrtle tree?
 Have you no green leaves, sir,
 Standing dejectedly?"

Then I beheld her and thrilled to behold her:
 She had such pretty feet, pacing so tenderly;
 Was that smile meant for me and that glance sent for me?
 Did she say "Hope!" to me ever so slenderly?
 And looking after her
 Her eyes came round again,
 Mischief and laughter there—
 Turned on the ground again:
 "Have you no daring, sir,
 Gazing dejectedly?"

White as the white rose and red as red roses,
 Under green arches where blossoms hung swoonfully;
 Bright as a gleam of gold, sweet as a dream of old,
 She took her way and the waters sang tunefully.
 Then, at her passing slow,
 I in a sweet distress
 Heard the bees humming low
 Deep in the leafiness:
 "Seek you not honey, sir,
 Thirsting dejectedly?"

The
Circling
Hearths.

Yes—I will speak to her—here by the poppies:

“Sweetheart, what moves you to such gentle pondering?”

Alas, the surprise to me! she turned her eyes from me,

Left me all hot and cold, tremulous, wondering!

Then said the poppies red:

“So—it is better so!

Forget!” the red poppies said,

“Sleep and forget her so.

Love is a torture, sir,

Musing dejectedly!”





HE bent very close in the dark till her hair
Brushed over his cheek.
'T was as silk, and the scent of it perfumed
the air;
But the Voice of the Past, it had whispered
"Beware!"
Had he hearkened it speak.

Close, closer she crept, and her arm wound him round
Till, searched through and sunned
By a perilous sweetness, his reason discrowned
In the dust tumbled down; in her witchery found
A brilliance that stunned.

But he paused yet a little; he heard from afar
The Voice of the Past:
"Her blood and thy blood, they are daggered for war;
She was born from the first not to make thee, but mar,"
And his soul stood aghast.

"Her hands they are red with the blood of thy sires;
Ancestrally, she
Drank as incense the fumes that coiled up from their
pyres;
Their moans were more sweet than the sweetest of lyres
Low-toned o'er the sea.

"Canst thou touch her and kiss her who wrought thee
this wrong,
Who dimmed thy race-star?
Her soul and thy soul are a-surge and a-throng
With foe-forces that warred through the centuries long,
And for ever shall war."

His fingers unclasped her wreathed fingers; she felt
The ice at their tips;

The
Circling
Hearths.

Then, firing, she sought with new ardours to melt
The frost in his veins, cooing softly, and knelt,
And so moist were her lips,

Red and moist in the dark, that, enslaved by her charms,
He stooped then and there,
And locked in her beautiful prison of arms
He laughed at the Past, the instinctive alarms
That bade him beware.



AS THE TIDE TURNS.

Roll over roll, roll over roll,
The tide comes in through the mist and rain ;
Roll over roll, roll over roll,
Roll over roll on the great sand shoal,
The tide turns round and goes out again.

Roll over roll, roll over roll,
And a soul comes in from the misty main ;
Roll over roll, roll over roll,
Roll over roll and a weary soul
Goes out to sea with the tide again.

MID-FOREST FEAR.

The
Circling
Hearths.



HE is standing at the gate,
Tall and sweet,
And although the hour be late
She will greet
Me, her lover,
Smiling over
Absent mind and tardy feet.

"Rest," I'll say to her, "and more rest,"
As she wraps her love around me,
And I'll tell her of the forest,
Of the strange, fear-haunted forest
Where the fleshless beings found me.

For I trod a rock-strewn rude way
Thinking only of my lover,
When the moonlight on the woodway
Made a weird-way of the woodway,
And a place where demons hover.

For the leaves that had been sleeping
On the sodden soil-bed lying,
Took a motion and 'gan creeping,
Like a thousand small feet creeping,
And there rose a distant sighing.

Why the trees did droop their tresses,
Weeping leaves for something under,
And what bode in dim recesses,
Feline-lurked in dim recesses,
Paled my cheeks and heart to ponder.

Had I feet I would have hurried,
But the moonlit forest chained me,
Soul and body grasped and worried,
With frost-fingers gripped and worried,
Till, half-stayed, my hurt heart pained me . . .

The
Circling
Hearths.

"Rest," I'll say, " my Love, and more rest ;
Things unseen have life and motion
And they haunt the moonlit forest—
Soul-affronting haunt the forest,
And men meet them on the ocean."

She will look so grave and kind,
Saying " Rest—
Rest is here for heart and mind
On this breast—
Put aside all
Fancies idle,
I will shield you—Love is best."



THE GLORY-CALL.

The
Circling
Hearths.



HEY sat at wine, their eyes aglow,
Impassioned, large, and fierce with heat,
Nor heard the moments come and go
With soft and unresisting feet.

He sat with them, his beard adrip
With slowly-gathering golden dew;
And evermore his burning lip
He quenched in yellow wine, and drew

A great breath in, as though some Fate
Had snatched him from uncouth desire . . .
All round about his comrades sate
With wine-drenched hands and eyes of fire.

Great sweetness thrilled them, and on love
They lingered, each strong life astart
With some old anguish close enwove
In the red tissue of its heart.

Power surged them, and they felt the strength
Of some lean lion in the grey,
Grey dusk that hurls his tawny length
Far forth upon the reeling prey.

One cursed the subtle clinging vine
That robbed his soul of wholesome breath;
One swayed afoot with lifted wine
And drank derisively to Death.

White women names that shone serene
Above the tumbled mists of ill
Were clouded then, and Malice keen
With savage hunger ranged at will.

But ever as with laugh or sigh
They pledged and filled from eve to morn,
The cynic hours went slowly by
With sidelong eyes of ancient scorn.

**The
Circling
Hearths.**

He sat with them aloof and mute,
His lips compressed, his hands atwine ;
Strange scorn of self, with eye acute,
Had reft the witchery of wine.

He shook their voices from his ear,
The wine flung far—they saw it fall;
He heard bell-toned, high-raised and clear,
A Forward-Call, a Glory-Call !

He turned, but suddenly were raised
The tongues of friends with olden love
Gold-winged and sweet ; soft words that praised
The rose-path, and strong hands that strove.

He freed his soul ; then softly in
Girl-visions floated, faces fresh
With lovesomeness and coy with sin,
Soft eyes dark-lashed and velvet flesh.

Some wound his hands with tressy train
Of scented hair, and some his heart
Assailed with song, but all in vain ;
He burst their wiles like threads apart.

Then warred the Past against his Will,
Her dagger tipped with bitter gall,
But fruitlessly ; to shafts of ill
He stood an adamantine wall.

Thus forth he fared, and far behind
The revel faded ; yet a voice
Down stealing on a subtle wind
With satire stung his austere choice.

Men-ties and maid-ties, ties that wed
The world in one large love and trust,
From sudden severance dripped with red,
Till all his heart grew dry as dust.

He trod the woe-way, white and worn,
Foot-worn and white with dust of brave
Fore-strayers—led by some forlorn
But lovely hope to dare the grave.

So moved he on, and when the years
Had wrung his soul with sobs and moans,
Came, through a wood-way dripping tears,
Unto a temple built of bones.

He entered, feeling here at least
A glory-crown should greet his eyes:
He saw instead a cowed priest,
An altar and a sacrifice.

Slow steps he made, and paused beside
The sacrifice, and strangely shook
With mortal fears, and opened wide,
Wide eyes, and, leaning downward, took

The veil away, and saw beneath
(The eyes how dim—how dull the gold!)
His slain youth there, sublime in death,
But pale and passionless and cold.

World-voices entered down the arch
Of Time defiant, with a weight
Of story—like a forest march
Of lions, dominant and great.

He heard them—heard without a sigh,
Transcendent in the light of morn . . .
But still the cynic hours went by
With sidelong eyes of ancient scorn.

THE FURNACE ROOM.



HEY seemed like demons of an underworld,
With hands and feet and certain human
traces ;
But lack of love was in their sunken eyes,
And lack of laughter on their flame-lit
faces.

From gloom to glow, recess to furnace-door,
They came and went, the great ship onward swinging ;
They heard the fire-gale, but they did not hear
The men and women in the cabin singing.

O, there was love and laughter up above,
Kind eyes, red lips, and forms asway with graces ;
But massed and matted fire and arid flames—
These and these only faced the flame-lit faces.

If one had said, " They have a heart like thine,
An eye for beauty and an ear for laughter ;
The stars are made for them, the sun for them ;
The obvious here, the dimly-guessed hereafter : "

What should another do but doubt the truth
Of words that ran so counter to his seeing,
That humanised the gorging giant's slaves
And made each toil-worn form a fellow being ?

And yet the multitude who slave and sweat,
Who know no lighting hope, whom want debases,
Whose bodies urge the engines of the world,
Are fiercely branded like these flame-lit faces.

The cool white deck is not for them—the stars,
The sun, the moon, the music on the ocean :
The reaching engines claim their ears and eyes ;
Their souls and bodies give the World-ship motion.

It may be doom forefronts her as she speeds,
Or Wrath or Ruin like a storm-wind chases ;
It may be . . . in the meantime Death is good,
And takes the fire-sting from their flame-lit faces.



HEY marshalled her lovers four and four,
A drum at their heads, in the days of old :
O, none could have guessed their hearts
were sore ;
They marched with such gayness in
scarlet and gold.

They came to the dance place on the hill
Where Death was the piper (he pipes full well) ;
They ground their arms and stood stock-still ;
And just why he sorrowed no one would tell.

O, some had been wed in distant lands,
And sweethearts had others—but let that pass ;
She held them at ease in snow-white hands,
For Queen over all was the Currency Lass.

They ushered her forth in all her charms—
Her eyes were alight and as gold her hair ;
She looked on the men and oped her arms—
What wonder if then they had wished them there ?

She hearkened the Preacher, thin and pale ;
His voice was as frost, yet his words were wise ;
But sin on the soul is like wrought mail,
And only a scorn of him fired her eyes.

“O, sorrow and pray, the hour draws nigh,
The Lord in His justice shall question thee !”
The Preacher made prayer ’twixt sob and sigh,
And down dropped his soul on bended knee.

“He fashioned thee fair”—a sideways look—
“Red lipped and right royal to look upon,
A joy of the Earth”—his thin hands shook,
And passionate lights in his deep eyes shone.

The
Circling
Hearths.

In scarlet and gold her lovers stood,
A host under famine with heads out-thrust ;
Keen-flamed in the sun ran reddest blood
And lips that were thirsty grew dry as dust.

They loved her for years—their tangled souls
Like silvery fish in her beauty-mesh
All breathless reposed . . . A dull drum rolls,
And Death is at hand for the Flower of Flesh.

She lifted her head for one love-word
(Afar was a clamor of new-come ships),
Her hair in a cloud the low wind stirred,
And silent they marvelled at her red lips.

"A lover was I from youth," she said ;
"And Love is my lord till I fill the grave"—
Then coyly she drooped her gold-haired head—
"Now, last of my lovers, a kiss I crave !"

The Preacher was whirled in passion's rout,
And dark was the stain on his soul's white snow,
Her lips were as life—his soul leapt out,
And sure there was laughter in Hell below.

"A singer was I these years," she said,
"And so I must sing till my soul doth pass."
Then forth from her sin-sweet lips there sped
The long-dead song of the Currency Lass.

The hands of the spoiler touch her throat ;
The noon grows near and the last sands run :
(Still over the scene her wild words float)
The noose is ready, the song is done.

"A dancer I was from birth," she said ;
"A baby, I danced on my mother's knee ;
Now whistle a jig, with swaying head,
And, lovers of mine, I will dance for ye !"

The
Circling
Hearths.

Stood each with a droop, a cheated man,
While Sorrow went weaving an ice-cold spell . . .
Good-bye to the world ! The dance began
With Death for the piper—he piped full well !



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DREAMS IN FLOWER



Portrait of
Louise Mack



Dreams in Flower

Louise Mack 



*With the exception of "As Long as Any May" (page
xliii) these Verses were originally published in The Bulletin.*



"Oh, to mix in my soul this city . . . !"

Dreams
in
Flower.



H, to mix in my soul this city,
That lies with feet in the fairest waters,
This young, unformed, Australian city!
In the harbour's arms the isles, her
daughters,
Dream all day in a perfect sleep.
Oh, to hold in my heart those waters,
Flowing east with the sun behind them,
Through great gates to the outer deep!

Where, O Earth! is a fairer city
Than this by night, when the Quay's half-circle,
Lit up like some old Italian city
With a hundred shades of red and purple,
Lights the dusk of the city's face?
Half the night to the gleaming circle
Boats glide in with their own lights shining—
Not the stars know a fairer place.

Ah, the mist on the moonlit city—
The sky-spun moonlight, half-light, half-darkness,
That wraps the walls of the seaward city,
And swathes and softens the high spires' sharpness!
Ah, the sweet of the wave-washed town!
Subtle city of wrong and darkness,
Young, but tireless in evil-doing—
One soul aches for your high renown.

Oh, to sing of this little city
A true, strong song that no years can weaken!
A song that tells how the sea-girt city
Cast her light o'er the seas, a beacon
Seen and sought by the far-most sail;
Made a name that no years could weaken;
Fought a way to the fore of nations,
All lands owning her vast avail.

ON THE WHARF.



ARKNESS lay over the land,
The city slept;
The rain from the wet sea strand
Through the darkness swept.
Sometimes the wind was the voice
Of a man in woe;
At times it was sweet, and crept
Like a strain that the heart has kept
From the songs of long ago.

Silent they watched from the shore
The night-tide rise;
It crept till the wharf's black floor
Touched it level-wise,
Upwards an inch and an inch
Till the wharf was wet.
Look now! And he raised his eyes:
They were sad as a man's who dies,
But their grief was not regret.

Eastward a glimmering shred
Spoke dawn arise,
"Our lives will go out," he said,
"As the day brings life.
Fear not the frost of the foam
Nor the freezing sleet:
God knows of our bitter strife,
How we fought, and we failed. Wife, wife,
May our death be swift and sweet!"

Close to his shoulder she stood:
"Love, hold me tight!"
She turned her head and her hood
Showed her face death-white.

"Oh, hold me close ! Is it now?
Will the waves be cold ?
Oh, Love, you will hold me tight !
In your arms I can brave Death's night
For the life Death's arms may hold."

"Battle and sorrow behind,
And lack of bread.
Before? Though our eyes are blind,
God can see," he said.
The waters lapped at their feet,
And their time was come ;
She crept to him close to bind
In her arms what the deep would find,
But the man fell white and dumb.

All in a space he was dead.
She knelt her down,
The waters washed round his head,
They lapped through her gown ;
She leaned her head on his heart,
And her falling hair
Wrapped both in a curtain brown,
And her face was warm on his own,
But the man lay silent there.

Never a cry nor a shriek.
Her voice was low :
"Hear, Love, though you cannot speak,
As a space ago.
God saw 't was sin, and he took
You, your soul to save.
He recked of the shame and woe
Of the ways that our souls would go
If we took the lives He gave.

Dreams
in
Flower.

"Saved! saved! my dearest," she cried.
She kissed his eyes;
She saw not the crawling tide
O'er the black posts rise;
Felt not the waves at her waist
With their icy hold.
And dawn over-crept the skies,
And the wharf was a wave-washed rise,
But they slept sweet sleep and cold.



THE LAGOON AT MANLY.

Dreams
in
Flower.



HERE the long beach runs to its far north
end,

And the sandways cease at the north
rock's feet,

And the foam is fiercer, the waves more
fleet,

Lies a low lagoon that the high tides blend

With their billows' brine as they come and go ;
And the ways of its waters are smooth and slow.

Though the salt waves sweep through it night or noon,

Yet its mother-stream from the backland sweeps ;

With a sighless swaying her water creeps

O'er the inward edge of the slow lagoon,

And her tender bosom bears life and grace

To the lips of the lake in the sea-girt place.

In the summer dusk, when the moon rides fast,

Ere the sunset's burning has faded quite,

And the seas fall eastward in liquid light,

On the sea-lake's face such a gleam is cast,

That it lies on the earth, in the day's red close,

Like the quivering leaf of a heavenly rose.

All the seas to eastward move silver sweet

In a floating shroud by the moonbeams made ;

All the westward skylands their lights have laid

On the lake that lies at the sunset's feet ;

And between the shroud and the golden lands

Is a narrowing pathway of surf-swept sands.

But in winter eves, when the sun is not,

And the moon is buried in mist and cloud,

And the sea, unlit, is a moaning shroud

Dreams
in
Flower.

For the bones of the dead that the sea-waves rot,
On the narrow shore between sea and lake
Boils an ocean of sea-foam and billow-break.

In the far sad sky not a rose is blown,
Not a fleeting gleam in the grey-bound west,
Not a mirrored glow on the lakelet's breast,
And no light where the waves round the north crags
moan;
But the cold sea creeps on the narrow sands,
And the shroud has enveloped the golden lands.



ILLUSION.

Dreams
in
Flower.



H, garden, garden! Yes, evermore,
Awake or sleeping, or passed or passing
The secret gateways of Death's domain,
My heart shall haunt thee for joy thou lost
me;
My soul shall search thee for vanished
pain.

Oh, garden, garden! The gate is closed,
And locked and barred with an ivy's tendrils
Till none can see where the door was set,
And all forget that this waste was garden:
But I, waste place, I do not forget.

Oh, garden, garden! The early morning
Throws tender green on your yellow grasses,
But lark, and lilac, and rose are done.
The white queen cactus is chained with ivy,
Thou art too large and too late, kind sun!

A sun there was that was small and near,
A flower and sun that could bloom and shine
When all the garden was winter-wet,
And life was lonely, and work was worthless.
It sank, dear garden! and our suns set.

And now I wonder if lark and lilac,
And gleaming cactus, and white pear-blossom,
Were ever shining in these grey ways.
Or were her whispers the gay lark's trilling,
Her eyes the lilac of other days!

THE CHOICE.



WAY across the line of trees,
Away beyond the belt of blue,
Is there a City high with spires?
Are there wide Fields that streams run
through?

Some times I think I see the spires,
And hear a mighty city's stir ;
And then there comes the sweet of fields
Drowned under drifts of wattle-burr.

But when I smell the sweet of fields,
Or when I hear the city's voice,
A dimness trembles on my sight,
My soul seems driven to a choice

Between these two aerial lands—
One wrought in marble's noble hue,
Carven and chased past earthly art,
And reared against a heavenlier blue :

And one low-lying, simple, slow,
Stretched out past reach of shore and sea,
A limitless, lethargic world
Where silence reigns eternally.

With every wind the wattle lies
In golden velvet on the fields ;
Our earth weaves golden wattle-webs,
But none the gold that this world yields.

And always in the morning sweet,
And sweeter still at noon. at night,
With no too closely-woven shade,
And no too brightly-beating light.

The silence is the sweetest thing,
The silent dawn, the silent day;
A sleep might last a century :
The birds that sing, sing far away.

And oh, the clover in the fields!
Oh, white magnolia on the air !
The sweetest flowers from every land
Grow all together sweetly there.

Or is the space the sweetest thing?
The rolling, green, unending plains,
The paddocks starred with dandelions,
The dreamy, verdant, English lanes.

My soul seems driven to a choice
Between these two aerial lands :
The simple, silent world of Fields,
The City built by artist hands.

The City's soul knows rarer life,
And ruddier dreams and deeds than here,
And I was ever one for dreams,
Longed ever in great deeds to share.

And underneath those cupolas
It may be that the poets dwell . . .
But oh, the silence of the Fields !
And oh, the Meadows' endless swell !

So every eve the struggle wakes,
The years go on. Not yet I know,
If when I pass I choose my Place,
To which of these my soul would go.



DEATH came to us, and beckoned ;

We feigned we did not see :
We hid our eyes a second,
And blindly prayed that he,
The Raven-pinioned Angel,
Would overlook our souls,
And find new prey to gather
To the muster of his rolls.

In vain we prayed and laboured,
In vain we did not see,
For Death the mailed and sabred
Had beckoned us, and we,
All bent and blind with weeping,
And wild with wish to stay,
Were driven forth relentless
From the heat of life's brief day.



Oh, the sweet of lying dead !

Of whispering to yourself, Death's done, Death's done :
To feel the Death-bands round your head ;
To know the Death tears all are shed,
And Death is past, Death that all life doth shun.

Oh, the sweet of lonely miles !

Of wanting not to sing, nor speak, nor sigh :
The lips have done with shallow smiles,
The eyes with tears and woven wiles,
And lips and eyes in rest's own settings lie.

Oh, the sweet of lying still !

Of lying stiller than a sea-deserted shore :
The hands have lost the weary will
That watched them working at life's mill,
The feet that ached to rest need run no more.

Oh, the sweet of lying still !
Of lying still and still, long year on year.
Wild overhead lives throb and thrill,
Waves beat the shore, and winds the hill,
But only silence ever enters here.



Lying here still, in these valleys of Death,
Lying all dead, and happy so to bide,
What if there came from life's far shores a breath
Of those old prayers we uttered when we died ?
What if there came the haunting of those tears
We shed and suffered, begging Death to stay
His sword a space, and spare our little years
Of light awhile, and turn his head away ?
What if there came an answer to the prayer
We deafened Death with ? What if Death heard now,
And smit with sudden pity, cried " Return ! "
And straightway took his seal from off our brow ?

Lying here still in the valleys of Death,
Lying all dead, and happy so to lie,
God, God ! the horror of a livened breath,
The death-bound body stirring from its tie.
Oh, God ! the horror of this perfect sleep
Made loud with life, and broken with the rain
Of living voices, while our bodies creep,
With shuddering footsteps, back to life again,
To find therein all old joys turned to gall.
More wild our tears than those we dying shed . . .
Thank God ! not all our prayers are answered us,
And " No Returning " bounds the soul once dead.



NOT to be bound by chains,
However golden ;
Not to be vowed or thrall'd,
In no way holden.
Not to be kept forever held
To a word that, meant when spoken,
May lose its meaning with the years,
Yet must live on unbroken.

Not to receive a vow
No man may pay thee :
Vowing to love till death,
Through death, it may be.
Not to shut eyes and turn away
From the Powers that loves dis sever,
Close eyes to Time, be blind, and say,
This love shall last for ever.

Only the Now we know,
Or dream we know it !
Others may reap the grain,
Though our hands sow it.
Future and past alike are not,
We may joy To-day, or sorrow,
May love as we two love, Beloved,
And love no more to-morrow.

Let us go into love
With eyes unblinded,
Seeing life's long beyond,
And death behind it ;
Feel we our fierce immortal faith
But in silence, Sweet,—not say it
In words ; for what are we, Beloved ?
A day, an hour, may slay it.

Yet oh, my one Beloved,
What vow could bind us
Closer than this one kiss,
The world behind us?—
Starlight and moonlight in the east,
In the west a dull, red river,
And somewhere God, to read our hearts,
And write on us, *For Ever*.



To soar as a wild white bird . . . !''



O soar as a wild white bird,
With a song unbound and fetterless!
With a gush of song in the throat,
Loosened and loud and letterless,
And the wind its only accompaniment.

To sing and soar and look down
On a world one leaves when one tires of it:
With a glancing wing for a sail,
Dashing, when one desires of it,
Through the spray of the great sea-wilderness.

Or sweeping with mighty curves
From land to sky, and to land again :
To cast off Time, and to stay
Where one's will alone lays hand on one :
Not to own or owe in the universe.

Sudden and swift some day
Meet Death, and know no fear of Him,
But close the eyes and have done.
. . . When a wild bird dies none hear of him.
He has sung and ceased, and is happiest.



CATTER along her way
 No bursting flowers, no roses,
 No lilies with heart of day,
 Primrose that the night uncloses;
 Not any flowers at all,
 For she loved them. Not as a pall
 Would she have them pressing upon her
 breast.
 Carry her flowerless to her rest!

Deaden the violins!
 Have not her feet been dancing
 To strains from their strings? . . . She wins
 Over all when her feet go glancing. . .
 Never a wind or wave
 Danced like that little child. Her grave
 Must be hushed from strains, lest her small, still feet
 Ache in the earth for the rhythm's beat.

Spirit of life and light,
 Restless, born blind to sorrow,
 Often when others slept by night
 She made her sweet, small plans for morrow.
Now if she wake . . . But no!
 Slumber like that lasts on. Ah, slow
 With the little pall! Let them turn her eyes
 East, where the suns that she rose with rise.

Only one sign of woe—
 For we believe her living,
 Hear her, as days ago,
 With her laugh, and her small kiss-giving—
 Only to draw the blind,
 And shut the pitiless sun behind;
 Lest the sunbeams, gleaming about the stair,
 Deadened one memory of her golden hair.

ON WAIREE HILL.



O you remember meeting, meeting
Here when the wattle's boughs grew golden?
(Ah, golden wattle, how sweet, how sweet!)
And under the drip of its gold burrs beating
Light on our heads with the wind just risen,
We cast our hearts into one strait prison,
And neither asked for the key to keep.
(Ah, golden wattles, how sad, how
sweet!)

Have you forgotten watching, watching
There, where the white dust clouds the cross-ways
(O, silent cross-ways, how still, how still!)
My blade in the bark of a great gum notching
Names that the years have made black and narrow—
Your name and mine, and a heart and arrow;
And you were angry, you said, and smiled.
(O, silent cross-ways, how sad, how still!)

Do you remember riding, riding
West, with the stretch of the plains before us?
(O, plains of Wairee, so great, so grey!)
The sky in the west was gilding, gliding,
Shedding its red in a million places;
The fleet wind gurgled against our faces—
Our rush was swifter than wing or wind.
(O, plains of Wairee, so grey, so still!)

'T is I remember creeping, creeping,
Over the hill with a slow procession,
(Your slowest wending of Wairee Hill).
I can hear through the years your mother's weeping,
See through the years the paddocks lying
In noon's dead stillness, one far crow flying
Where light made gold of its dingy wing.
(Ah, God, those paddocks so wide, so still!)

AT EASTER.

Dreams
in
Flower.



HE gateways of Gethsemane
Have mouldered in decay ;
Rank poppy and anemone
Make red the sacred way ;
The cry of Christ the crucified
Rings dimmer with the years ;
A louder sound has deadened it—
The fall of the World's Tears.

The cry of Christ the crucified
Came ringing from the Cross,
Mixed with the two thieves' at His side,
And the world beheld His loss
In a grand and glorious martyrdom,
Made by His own commands ;
It heard the Garden Agony,
It saw the Bleeding Hands.

Its hardened heart has thrilled to these
For many a hundred years,
And many a life has robbed its ease
To win its Christ more tears ;
More tears for such a martyrdom,
So exquisite a death,
That lends the saints their hope of Heaven,
And lightens Sin's last breath.

The gateways of Gethsemane
Have mouldered in decay ;
Rank poppy and anemone
Make red the sacred way.
The cry of Christ the crucified
Rings dimmer with the years
A louder sound has deadened it—
The fall of the World's Tears.

Dreams
in
Flower.

The World goes weeping on, but not
For Christ its tears are shed ;
The sadness of a living lot
Is keener than a dead :
The World is weeping tears of blood,
Wrung from a tortured heart ;
The tears that flow for one's own want
Sting with the sorest smart.

Even the children's tears are poured
Into this sea of tears ;
They know the story of the Lord
Who gave a life for theirs :
But what is Christ to Hunger ?
Dead Thorns to living Thirst ?
The children's wails are loudest, or
Their little hearts would burst.

Listen ! Along the centuries
A bird has sought to sing ;
And every wind has beaten it,
Even the winds of Spring.
And all along the centuries
One flower has tried to blossom,
And every Spring has withered it,
And every Winter frozen.

If from the dark Gethsemane
The cry of Christ rings down
O'er poppy or anemone,
And ruined gate and town,
It is to tend the flower
And give the bird his wing—
Poor bud that never opens,
Poor bird that may not sing.

The bird would sing supernally
If anyone would hear,
The flower would bloom eternally
If any held it dear,
The World would stem its sea of tears,
The Christ eyes smile above,
If in the straitened places bloomed
The Bud and Bird of Love.



LEAF MUSIC.



LISTEN! the Winds are playing
A fugue in the orchard trees :
They creep through the boughs of apple,
And linger among the leaves,
And touch, with a gentler straying,
Leaves over-soon decaying.

The Winds come singing, singing,
Through leaves with a silken sheen :
This song is a silver treble,
With an alto note washed in ;
It sounds like an apple flinging
On grass the sun is stinging.

But oh, when Winds come rushing
Through wattle, when day's at noon !
Set low like a mother's murmur
Into ears when the eyelids droop ;
Set soft, like a bee's hum hushing
The flowers his lips are brushing.

O, gleaming, dripping Wattle !
The Wind, when it blows through you,
Is a velvet-throated singer,
And it sings to a golden tune.
All noon, where the noonlights mottle,
I lie and listen, wattle !

And, listening, pass the border
Where only a child may stray,
Into the land of fairies . . .
The years since I went that way !
Ah, Wattle ! are you the warder
Who guards that dim, dear border ?

The Wind loves warm-leaved apples,
Warm-hued in the light or shade ;
The song has a deeper setting
That blows through a leafy spray
Gone red as the blood-red maples,
Or sunset sky at Naples.

But stealing through the edges
Of gums, with the curl still green,
An exquisite treble dances,
And thrills to the lightest breeze.
Not Pan's own reeds and sedges
Ring sweet as young gums' edges.



Dreams
in
Flower.

"I take my life into my hands . . ."



TAKE my life into my hands :
You shall not touch, you shall not see.
I hold it there away from you,
The fitful shining soul in me.

Ah, but you do not know 't is hid,
Because you did not know 't was there :
You look along the curving lip,
Search the deep eyes and touch the hair,

And cry, "Oh, love me, Woman, love !
Your eyes are stars, your mouth a flower."
And all the while a low voice says,
"This is a fool without the power

To look beneath, and find a free
Unfettered spirit, serving none ;
A heart that loves and does not love,
A space unfrod by anyone."

You do not look for these. Yet I,
So loved and loving, wonder too
If underneath that clamour dwells
Just such a hidden world in you.

For you, perhaps, have turned your soul,
And held it there away from me,
Saying, "She would not recognise ;
She would not know, she could not see."

So let us keep our silences !
I'll honour yours, or mine will break.
And you, guard well the sacredness
Of mine, for your own soul's shrine's sake.

"I dreamed of Italy . . . "

Dreams
in
Flower.



DREAMED of Italy,
And you were there . . .
Oh, Italy, dream Italy!
Are you so fair?

A golden gondola
For ever fled
Up silver waterways :
An old moon led.

Beneath a midnight bridge
We slower swept,
And kissed and whispered where
The black shades crept.

And Dante passed and smiled,
And Beatrice :
Their little gondola
Was gold as this.

Old angel Italy
Was everywhere—
Poets and painters dead,
They were all there.

When I see Italy . . .
Oh, broken dream !
For you are sleeping by
An Austral stream ;

And golden gondola,
And nightingale,
And ah, the shadowy bridge,
Are all a tale !

IN THE ATTIC.



WHAT does it matter what they say
While there is the sunset, there the stars,
And over the city's mistiness
The moon comes out of her silver bars?—

And somewhere out of the sight of eye
The river runs through a low, long mist,
Under the bridge where the lovers cross
Into the fields for their evening tryst.

What does it matter? Up and up
The mounting staircase twists and winds,
Till, see! the starlight is almost touched,
The world that hates us is left behind.

Open the door with the rusty key,
Close and lock it, and enter in :
Straightway walk into Paradise,
And let your time as a god begin.

Here in the Attic all things fade,
And dwindle into their own small size;
Brain-fires burn when the coals go out,
And stars shine in with solacing eyes,

And weave a ladder into the room,
And wave and beckon until we dare
The first frail foot-hold. Then they turn
And veil their windows and leave us there,

Low and alone on the silver stair,
The attic window out of our sight,
The stars' gates hidden in mystery,
The shining ladder our only light.

Rolled in the mighty atmosphere
We stumble heavenwards bar by bar,
Through the midnights, till feet refuse,
And reel and tremble—and there 's the star !

What if the Attic had not been !
A silver ladder would never dare
Down the stars to the basement world
Whose dirt would tarnish the shining stair.

Open the door with the rusty key,
Close and lock it, and enter in ;
Straightway walk into Paradise,
And let your time as a god begin.



Dreams
in
Flower.

"Oh, to begin again . . . !"



H, to begin again!

Not from the first, but now,
Letting the threads fall where
Tangles too bitter grow.

Oh, to begin, and look
Straight into everything!
Seeing without the beam
Of old traditioning.

How would I see thee, Death?
Mother with melting eyes,
Waiting to waft her child
Into some Paradise,

Whether of rest or joy,
Laughter or solitude,
Just what would satisfy
Each child's unspoken mood:

Mother with loving lips,
Calling, in tenderness,
All the worlds unto her,
Even the motherless.

How would I see thee, Love?
Casting tradition's beam
Out of my eyes. Ah, Love!
Swift little fiery gleam,

Faded before it breaks
Into the heart's recess,
Where the black shadows lurk
In languid loneliness.

Faded and passed away,
Turning the shadows there
Colder and deadlier
After that golden glare.

How would I see thee, Truth?
Fought for so patiently :
Ah, for the Wounded Hands!
Ah, for the Agony!

Must I behold in thee
Only a sacrifice
Æons have perished for,
War-time and armistice.

Wonderful sacrifice !
Yes, and I come, I come,
Low to the altar steps :
Farewell to hope and home!

Seeing without the beam
Of old traditionings . . .
Brighten the altar fire !
Tighten the victim's strings!

TO DARKNESS.



OME sing Hymns to the Dawn :
Let them sing ! I will not bring
My harp to keep accompaniment.
Some make Music of Moons :
Ah, pale Nocturne ! my pulses spurn

Your liquid silver, your dim, wet gold.
I worship you, Moon, but you shall not hold
My soul in your hands, and the Sun's red poem
Shall pass me by like a hidden cithern.

Moon, is it fault of mine that I do not set
Your tender crystal high in my heart ?
Moon, is it shame to me that I will not let
Your fragile shining light me to Heaven ?
Fault or shame, I will keep my name
To set at the end of the only song
I ever will sing, my whole life long.

Sun, is it written down in your red, red book
How I was faithless, who loved you so well ?
Then is it written, too, that my false eyes look
Up to your face, Sun, and all's forgiven ?
Faith or fall, I must keep my all
To swell the sound of the only song
I ever will sing, my whole life long.

Dawn, shall I weep that the youth of the world
from me
Has passed and left me lonely and old,
Blind to the perfect rose that I would not see,
Your beckoning blossom, tenderly calling ?
Blind with tears, I have turned the years
To swell the tides of the only song
I ever will sing, my whole life long.

Night, will you hear as I lie at your shadowy gate,
And silent, silent, wait for your perfect breast?
Night, will you know, though my Wandering Heart
 is late,
It is yours at last, and is yours for ever?
Little Dawn and the Middle Morn,
And Moon and Sun, I have left them all
For the tireless peace of your passionless thrall.



Listen, listen, my Heart!
 Let us lay the white Moon here asleep,
Kiss her, and say a low good-bye;
 Cover her face with the vines that creep
 Through sunny places. Ah, do not weep!
 Let us lay her here, asleep.

Listen, listen, my Heart!
 Let us hush the baby Dawn to rest;
Kiss her, and sob a sweet farewell;
 Cover her little angel breast
 With tiny blossoms, half-blown, unpressed . .
 Let us leave her here, at rest.

Listen, listen, my Heart!
 Let us clasp the red Sun once and then
Leave Him and utter no good-bye.
 Cover his limbs with the eglantine
 Too heavy and honeyed for mortal men,
 Let us clasp him once, and then——



 Then to the Night,
 And good-bye to light,
 For ever, and ever, and ever.
O, tender, noble, imperious Black!
Best and bravest, shield that I lack,

Dreams
in
Flower.

And lacking, fail in the fight out there :
Wrap me round in your long black hair,
Cover me close with your tender arms,
Blot out the memory of stars and morn,
Wrap me close in your long black hair,
Warm and fragrant, and when I stare
Up through its masses to where the trees
Mutter above me their Symphonies,
I shall see no trees, and the Symphonies
Will persuade my beliefless, vagrant soul
That she is the only music-maker,
Only law-giver, condoner, law-breaker . . .
And wrapped in your shadow, so close, so strong,
Lying silent, perhaps ere long
I shall make or capture one perfect song.

Wrapped in the Night !
Ah, the wild delight
Of the great fresh world that creeps down and near.
Wrapped in the Night !
Shut out from the light,
At last I can listen, at last I can hear.
At last I have caught the meaning
That haunted me always, but always fled
Just as I gained it. Now living or dead
I shall never be haunted any more,
For the black, black Night has revealed the shore
Of the furthest sea in any world,
Has carried me up to the highest steep,
Has borne me under the under-deep,
And lying silent I know, ere long,
I shall catch and capture my perfect song,
My splendid, passionate, scythe-like song,
Blown of the dark as a soul is blown
Out of the black unknown.

HORSE O' GOLD.

Dreams
in
Flower.



FANTASY, Fantasy, fly away !

I'll mount you : we'll follow the hurrying
Day,—

Chase the gold through amethyst lakes,
Burn our bosoms with scarlet flakes,
And leaping over the sunset's brim
Steal a chord of the young star's hymn.

Ah, Fantasy, you and I
Stop for nothing on earth or sky !

Charger of Gold, with arrogant feet,

Carry me, serve me !

*Let me ride and dream on your haughty back
Till we come to the Little Death Track ;*

*Then, Fantasy ! then, ah then,
A bosom of earth, and a horse of black.*

Fantasy, Fantasy, fly away !

I'll mount you : we'll follow no Gold to-day,—

Turn our ways to some uttermost grove,
Look once more for our Perfect Love,
And calling, calling, into the mist
Hear a voice that the stars have kissed.

Charger of Gold, with arrogant feet,

Carry us, serve us !

*Let us ride and dream on your haughty back
Till we come to the Little Death Track.*

*Then, Fantasy ! Then, ah, then !
Her passionate arms and her hair of black.*

Fantasy, Fantasy, ah, the day !

I mount, and you sadly refuse the way.

Tired or halt, with impotent feet,
Blind and weary of wind and heat,—

Dreams
in
Flower.

Ah, stumbling, sorrowful, deadly hour
When Fantasy falls like a rain-torn flower !
Once, Fantasy ! you and I
Stopped for nothing on earth or sky.

*Charger of Gold, with wayworn feet,
Onward a little !
While I promise and pray on your weary back,
Soon to come to the Little Death Track.
Then, Fantasy ! gladly then
I'll yield you, my steed, for a horse of black.*



BURY IT DEEP.

Dreams
in
Flower.



BURY it deep, bury it deep,
Under the earth where the secrets keep.
Over it pile, with a pale, kind hand,
Clouds and fancies from No Man's Land.
Cover it over, and do not weep,
And bury it deep, bury it deep!

Bury it deep, bury it deep,
Never let sign of it upward creep.
Over its grave, with regardless feet,
Dance, defying your heart's loud beat.
Merrily fight through the tangled sedge,
And merrily dance on the grave's red edge.

Under the earth there are hidden deep
Turbulent hearts that are well asleep.
Under the earth, without pride or shame,
Lie they, till no one recalls their name.
Stately, and silent, and well asleep,
They buried it deep, they buried it deep.

Not for us all is ready yet
Confident coffin for all regret ;
Not for us all has there opened wide
Infinite peace on a green hill-side ;
Yet and for all there 's a charge to keep
To bury it deep, bury it deep !

Bury it deep, deeper and deep,
Under the breast where the secrets keep.
Over it pile, with compassionate hand,
Clouds and fancies from No Man's Land.
Cover it over ! They do not weep
Who bury it deep, bury it deep.

Dreams
in
Flower.

That is the worth of pain and tears,
That is the secret of all the years,
That is the value of life and grave,—
All the tears you can stop or save,
Covering over the eyes that weep,
And burying deep, burying deep!





LOVED you on Earth:

Shall I love you in Heaven?
Shall we carry our love through the hush
of the grave?
Bear it, unbroken,
Give to each other the soul that we gave
Each to the other on earth?
Oh for a sign, oh for a token!

I found you on Earth,
Shall I find you in Heaven?
Shall I feel your warm breast on my breast after This,
Carven, and frozen?
Feel ever more that white mouth in a kiss?
Smiling and stubborn it gleams,
Cold as young lips Love never rose in.

No, no! as you lie,
In insouciant silence,
Death reveals that the love on your lips was a lie,
Insolent coldness.
What! had you loved could you meet me like this?
Woman, you lied when you loved!
Death has betrayed the bounds of your boldness.

Ah, see! But I kneel:
Do you hear, do you listen?
I will wait, I will wait, till your arrogance melts . . .
Till your insolent whiteness
Fires to these tears of red flame on your hands.
God! for this soul of my soul
Smiles, while I weeping yield up my life's brightness.



ITY, I never told you yet—

Oh, little City, let me tell—
A secret woven of your wiles,
Dear City with the angel face,
And you will hear with frowning grace,
Or will you break in summer smiles?

This is the secret, little town,
Lying so lightly towards the sea.
City, my secret has no art,
Dear City with the golden door;
But oh, the whispers I would pour
Into your ears—into your heart!

You are my lover, little place,
Lying so sweetly all alone.
And yet I cannot, cannot tell
My secret, for the voice will break
That tries to tell of all the ache
Of this poor heart beneath your spell.

Dreaming, I tell you all my tale;
Tell how the tides that wash your feet
Sink through my heart and cut its cords,
Dreaming, I hold my arms, and drag
All, all into my heart—the flag
On the low hill turned harbourwards,

And all the curving little bays,
The hot, dust-ridden, narrow streets,
The languid turquoise of the sky,
The gardens flowing to the wave,
I drag them in. O City, save
The grave for me where I must lie!

Yet humbly I would try to build
Stone upon stone for this town's sake ;
Humbly would try for you to aid
Those whose wise love for you will rear
White monuments far off and near,
White, but unsoiled, undesecrate.

Dreams
in
Flower.



LAND I LOVE.



AND I love! I will find your meaning.

See, I swear I will know you yet!

You shall reveal the soul of your song,

And I will set it as never set.

March of shadows to muted music,

Heat-mists creeping, I know, I know;

And I know, dear Rain, that your desolate
story

Has a hidden sweet and an inner glory.

Trees of mine! ah, the nights I listen,

Nights I steal through your black, black shade,

I and the old gums sorrow alone,

The young gums give me their accolade.

Mile on mile through the death-grey silence,

Twilight, midnight, or yellow noon,

And 't is I who know that your desolate story

Has its hidden sweet and its inner glory.

Dark and dawn through the grey gums sweeping,

Blazing gold of the afternoon,

All have revealed the soul of their song,

But where, O Land, is my promised tune?

I am silent, I have no music,

Maestoso nor Allegro,—

But you know how fain is my impotent story

To unfold the hymn of your veiled great glory.

Only this can I sing, and singing,

Land of mine! you will understand,

You have revealed the heart of my song,

While I went seeking for yours, O Land!

Your young lips have disclosed my courage,

Deathless courage, my Continent!

For I learnt from you that my life's own story

Has a deeper depth and a higher glory.

Heat and haze! you have crept and caught me.

See, 'tis you who will know me yet.

You have revealed the soul of my song ;

'T is you who have set it, as never set.

March of shadows to muted music,

White gums waiting, we know, we know !

And we know, Dear Land, that our desolate story

Has its hidden sweet and its inner glory.





HOPIN, CHOPIN, ah, Wanderer!

What hast thou in thine hands for me?
Roses, roses and violets:
Death smiles up through the company.

One bud only is never blown :
Rose of childhood thou canst not weave
Into the mesh of thy music-looms :
Child-lips laughing, and eyes that grieve,

Never move through thy melodies,
Never dance to thy scherzo-strings . . .
Lovers dreamy and decadent . . .
Never note of a young voice rings.

Master, fragile and passionate,
Let me sound but one note with thee !
What is youth but a waiting place,
Dreary dawn of a Day to Be.





ONLY begged a moment's breath
Of all love's life—
Only to live for once, and feel
My heart cut like a knife

Against my breast, and know
Of love for me.
Live for a life-time then, God said,
And saying, set me free.

He set me free, and forth I flew,
O Love, to you ;
I fought the darkness with my soul,
And laughed, and mocked, and flew.

Oh, but the fight was fierce, Beloved !
You cannot know :
Black waves washed up from unknown seas,
I was so small and slow.

Yet all the while I fought and laughed,
And thought of home :
Home on your heart ! I would have fought
A million seas to come ;

To come to you for that one space
Out of all years ;
To be against your breast, and shed
My tears, and see your tears.

To come to you ! And Love, I came
Through wind and rain ;
Through moaning seas, and chanting trees
That carolled at my pain.

Dreams
in
Flower.

And bitter chasms like Death's lips
I leapt for you ;
All the dark mocking marshy lands
Where the night-serpents grew :

And came at last, and saw your eyes
Wet with great bliss ;
And nearly fell against your heart,
And nearly reached your kiss,

When God cried : *You have lived, my child !*
And shut the door,
And shut my lover from my arms
For ever, evermore.

Nearly you lay against his breast,
God said, *To-day :*
That was the moment when you lived
As long as any may.



"No place for dreamers . . . !"

Dreams
in
Flower.



O place for dreamers!

No room for dreams!

Then why these visions,

And why these gleams?

No room for dreamers!

Oh, bitter fate

That sends a dreamer

Through earth's grey gate.

The birds may linger

And laugh all day,

The winds may loiter

Their lives away,

And every flower

And little leaf

And tall red forest

And yellow sheaf,

And lazy lily

And jonquil fair

May use a life-time

To watch a star.

No room for dreamers!

Oh, bitter fate

That sends a dreamer

Through earth's grey gate!

For you, you dreamer,

With eyes on space,

The thin grass covers

Your only place.

Dreams
in
Flower.

BEFORE EXILE.



HERE is my last good-bye,
This side the sea.
Good-bye! good-bye! good-bye!
Love me, Remember me.

This is my last good-bye,
This side the sea.
I bless, I pledge, I cling,
Love me, Remember me.

This is my last good-bye
To each dear tree,
To every silent plain,
Love me, Remember me.

This is my last good-bye,
This side the sea.
O, friends! O, enemies!
Love me, Remember me.

You will remain, but I
Must cross the sea,
My heart is faint with love,
O, Land! Remember me.

You will not even ask
What claim has she.
She loved us, she has gone . . .
'T is all, Remember me.

This is what you will say,
My Land across the sea,
She was of us, has gone . . .
And you 'll Remember me.

Here is my last good-bye,
This side the sea.
Farewell! and when you can
Love me, Remember me.

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A Personal Note.

MARIE LOUISE MACK was born in the early seventies at Hobart, Tasmania,—seventh of thirteen children, all of whom are living. Her parents were natives of Ireland; the father (the Rev. Hans Mack) of German stock, the mother from the Irish north. In her youth the family removed in succession to Clare, to Adelaide, to Strathalbyn (in South Australia), and to Morpeth, to Windsor, to Sydney (in New South Wales)—the rule of the Wesleyan ministry limiting residence to a period of three years with one congregation. In 1896 Miss Mack married John Percy Creed, a Sydney barrister.

As a girl Louise Mack spent five years at Sydney High School: and her memories of school-days are presented in "Teens" and in "Girls Together." Failing to matriculate at Sydney University, she became a teacher, and later a writer. While at school she essayed literature as an editor of "The High School Magazine," and in recent years her pen has been very busy. Her published books in prose are: "The World is Round" (London, 1896); "Teens" (Sydney, 1897); "Girls Together" (Sydney, 1898). For three years, until her departure for London in April, 1901, she was employed on the staff of *The Bulletin* as writer of "A Woman's Letter" from Sydney.

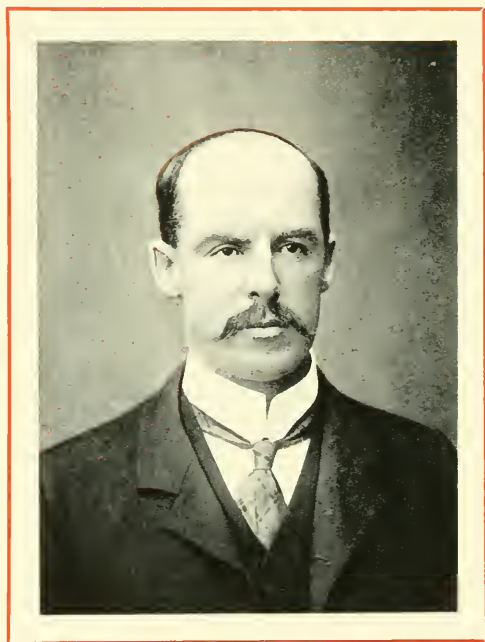
A new theory of the development of ideas suggests that, in inheriting the ancestral thought-machine, we inherit also a number of latent ancestral thoughts. This furnishes interesting explanation of the irresponsible character of lyric poetry. From the earliest times the poet has been regarded as "possessed" by some external power. In this "possession" the priestess of Apollo raved, the Italian improvisatore chanted, the Maori tohunga writhed and foamed. From the earliest times the poet's chief themes have been love and death, the beauty of skies and woods and waters,—aboriginal passions and the natural phenomena familiar from the human cradle. We know now that the power resides in the poet's brain, that the poetic "possession" is mere escape of brain-centres from their normal control; and we infer that lyric poetry is essentially the product of inherited emotion.

Sometimes the escape is conscious, the inheritance realised. You feel a detachment, a duality in your brain, as if some primal breath had blown across it. In our small local sphere, Roderic Quinn tells me that there are times when his own individuality seems to sleep; when he fancies himself standing on a Donegal cliff under a wild sky, gazing through driving sleet at the dark Atlantic heaving below; and strange alien thoughts come teeming, crowding. Between dreams and waking Will Ogilvie, bred on the Scottish border, has imagined himself heading a reivers' band across the Tweed, and the picture has recurred with a vivid, an intimate detail which seems never to have been learnt through his own senses. And Louise Mack says that "When I write verse I am not conscious of words—the feeling and the thought are almost dropped on the paper. The moment I am conscious, think of a word—the poem is dead, and I stop,—can't hear it, don't feel it. I always write poetry as if it is someone else's that I've half-forgotten, and slowly am drawing down from the recesses of the brain, driven to it by some tide of feeling."

This statement supplies a reason for formal blemishes in the work of a truly lyric poet such as Shelley. His song is as fresh and spontaneous as his own skylark's, and as imperfect. The sweeter Keats, like the nightingale which he invoked, is also more artificial. In her minor place, Louise Mack's breaches of poetic rule are the complement of her poetic merit. For the most part, her verses are little rills of song, gushing through channels of melody as naturally as a brook from its source, and meeting obstacles to expression as simply as a brook meets obstacles to its flow. They are characteristically personal, reflecting Australian skies and landscapes, Australian suns and glooms, through moods of poignant original emotion. That often they wind through mournful sedges, beneath sad eucalypts, is less idiosyncratic than accidental. In their quality of poetry, they form the most distinguished body of verses written by a woman in our country.

A.G.S.

THE WEST WIND



Portrait of
Hubert Church



The West Wind

Hubert Church





*If one rose should creep
To bow herself upon the grass
Where Thou art buried (ah, too deep!)
And tremble when the angels pass,
She could not reach Thee, Dear, asleep.*

*But my heart shall wind
About Thee in this secret place,
To leave all shadows far behind,
And gather all thy sweetness, Grace,
Into the chambers of the mind.*





FROM out the city's maelstrom
To thee with thankfulness I come,
For thou dost scatter in thy breeze
The treasure of a thousand seas!

Thou hast the breath of spicy gales
From islands of unfurling sails,
And, scarce above the tide, the shores
Irradiate of madrepores.

There thou, perchance, hast blown athwart
Some mouldering fabric all amort,
Whose heart, dear God! may even be
A sepulchre amid the sea;

Like some despairing man outworn,
Who carries in his breast forlorn
The ghosts of faith no more enjoyed,
Love, hope, and conscience unalloyed.

Yet in thy strenuous harmony
Methinks I hear the threnody
Of surging continents that roll
In sable terror to the pole.

There thou thyself in pain dost go
Through sleet and lightning, hail and snow,
Impetuous for the azure main
Where thou canst rock to sleep again.

Pour on me the magic thralls
Of old cathedrals, in whose walls
A thousand years of praise have given
Their sanctuary the peace of heaven.

And let your whisperings disclose
The secret of the nor'land rose,
Who waves her long white life to sleep
Beneath some scarred, embattled keep,

Whose twilight elfin bugles blow
Unearthly music that does flow
To where the cataract is poured
Within the eremite fiord.

Where'er my early footsteps strayed
Thy wild companions too have played,
And here upon this Southern shore
Have sent with thee my youth once more.

And as I watch thy trailing cloud,
My heart beneath the verge is bowed
To where the casement of the boy
Oped every morning into Joy.

I hear a sound, I feel a touch :
The ocean's depth it is not such,-
The dawn of an intenser day
Beyond the sunset, far away.



ROSALIND has come to town !

All the street's a meadow,
Balconies are beeches brown
With a drowsy shadow,
And the long-drawn window panes
Are the foliage of her lanes.

Rosalind about me brings
Sunny brooks that quiver
Unto palpitating wings
Ere they kiss the river,
And her eyes are trusting birds
That do nestle without words.

Rosalind ! to me you bear
Memories of a meeting
When the love-star smote the air
With a pulse's beating :
Does your Spirit love to pace
In the temple of that place ?

Rosalind ! be thou the fane
For my soul's uprising,
Where my heart may reach again
Thoughts of heaven's devising :
Ee the solace self-bestowed
In the shrine of Love's abode !

i.

OW blest the wandered bird that sings
 With such a woodland ecstasy,
 Till song is Sorrow's self, and he
 Folds on thy roof his fretted wings,
 All pain forgotten when with thee!

Thus would my wandered heart achieve
 (So far outborne on wayward tide)
 A still roof in thy heart, to hide
 Shielded from lonely Night, and weave
 Youth's dream again, and there abide!

ii.

One bird upon the roof,
 A chorister forlorn,
 Sings to the cloistered Morn,
 Hid in her cloudy woof,
 A song that doth unfold
 Itself in plaited gold.

Sing what I ne'er can say—
 The wave may love the shore,
 The flowers the dews that pour,
 The tired winds love to stay
 On cliffs where moss has lain,
 Spent with the toiling main.

Dearer to me one heart
 Where I would love to dwell,
 Woven with magic spell
 Into its inner part,
 Sunk in its secresy
 Like a star in the sea.

vii.



LOOK! my Tasso, where the smoke
Rolls beyond the clouds austere,
Far above the kea's stroke,
And the lightning of the drear
Cliff-embattled atmosphere.

Somewhat we have dwelt apart,
Yet the smoke above the strife
Pictures with a vivid art
Sepias of the dizzy life
On the keen edge of the knife.

When the fire was in the brain,
Facile love upon the lips,
Splendid Passion threw the rein
On the fiery coursers' hips,
Scourged by Youth's unsparing whips.

Hard Ambition vainly glozed :
Ours the moment, ours the bliss ;
Love in loving scarce reposed
For a moment, for a kiss,
O'er satiety's abyss.

Oft the mazy-spinning blood
Lifted to the merry horn,
Many a leap athwart the flood
Let us see that Joy is born
Best above the earth forlorn.

Sabres flashed when we were young,
And the sparkle of the blade
Round our heads an aureole flung :
Death himself might be afraid
Of that Paladin brigade!

All are vanished : they are dust,
As a lute whose fingers lie
Curled about a poniard's thrust,—
Alien love whose anthem high
Waked one chamber, but to die.

Here upon the giant hills,
Far from fretting of the sword,
And the grinding of the mills
For the harvest of the Lord,
Thou and I make one accord.

Underneath a stunted branch
Evermore our sleep shall be,
Waked not by the avalanche
Or the huddled revelry
Of the cataract to the sea.

Torrents from eternal snow
We alone have ever seen,
Shall leap over us below,
Sanctifying the ravine
In our sepulchre serene . . .



EAR Swallow from a fonder sky!
Why do you leave your happy mate
Within the golden lands that lie
Beyond the evening's shadowy gate?
Ah, tender wings! you bear a load
That only Memory may see,—
The fragrance of my Youth's abode,
The ecstasy of life to me!

It may be that their beat has weaved
A path by Childhood's starry creek,
Where jealous ferns droop interleaved
To hear the whispering waters speak;
And thou, perchance, hast flown aloof
Athwart the garden sweet and wild,
And rested on the sheltering roof
Where tender Love and I have smiled!

Already thou on ceaseless wings
Art bidden to thy loved return;
To all thy flight my vision clings,
For far-off home like thee I yearn;
And through the warm, unfolding tears
I see the sacred fount again
That poured the Joy of Childhood's years—
The still, supremest heart of Pain!

•

ASLEEP

The
West Wind



HE bird that bears the Spring,
Throwing her to the bud,
And winnows with his wing
Her cloister solitude,
May be your soul's escape
In a delicious shape!

Is it the wind that blows
Dreamily down the brook,
Or tangled in a rose
Beneath the rainbow's crook,
Where she her love has told
Into its starry fold?

Whitherso'er it flits,
Beauty and love are there!
Only thy soul admits
Only the true and fair . . .
*Waken! and let me be
Chosen to dwell with thee!*





OCEAN, let us sit and watch the flowing ships,
Here where your foot has touched a
shivering stone
To leave the merry sunshine for eclipse,
Down, down, for ever, darkened and
alone,

Beneath the cozening ripples smooth and cool . . .
What's Life but a poor stone flung in a pool?

The lying waves have lapped it—oh, poor Stone!

Earth has no dearer sight than a warm sea,
Braided with isles, forgetting the far mean
Concealed in the dim Ocean's agony :
But, dear, there lie beneath these shallow waves
Christ knows how many unattended graves.

The waves are all about us—we are one
With the unstable waters and the tides,
Symbols of ever-varying threads bespun
By Fate that never in a mood abides;
We leave our fretful image here, or go
Without a fateful scion : better so!


We know the motion of a molten star,
We weigh the rapture of the rushing wind,
Unweave the light,—but know not what we are,
Nor whose the fetters that intently bind :
Why we do sorrow, joy, or smile, or weep,
Scatter a little fragrance—then a sleep.

If I were as a shell upon the beach,
The virgin calyx of voluted flowers,
The utter magic of a song to teach
Sorrow a solace in belated hours,
I should be more than I can ever be :
Beggared of doubt, nor wistful all to see.

So be it, dearest! watch the great Sun die
In marvellous thunder, to our ears unknown,
Music of equal planets that do lie
In the full plane of knowledge: we are thrown
By a capricious hand, the wise, the fool,
Like a poor stone that's flung into a pool!



RETROSPECTION

 F there were any of the sons of men
Could win from Fate to hold their youth
again,
Would any travel more
The paths they trod before?

Would any vex those hyacinthine days
For love of woman, or the many's praise;
The vain delights that trend
To the abhorred end—

Age, that discovers there is nothing worth? . . .
God, when He flung this unessential earth,
Spun it with bias given
To sunder it from Heaven!

TO A SEAGULL



HERE the hollows are wave-enchanted,
Here the winds that are scourged through
zones
Blow with trumpets an anthem haunted,
Dreams of coral and dead men's bones.

Over the bars, the foam, the thunder,
Purple delights and sluiced lagoons,
Over the reefs that shatter asunder
Fiery waves in million moons,

Over the ships that move untiring,
Lovely as floating madrepores,—
Here they lull, like a soul desiring
Ultimate slumber on these shores.

Here away from the World's endeavour
I, the gull, and the cloud are three,
Two the same for ever and ever,
Inaccessible unto me !

They from dawning of Time have floated
Careless over the earth and sea,
Ne'er like mortals in darkness moated,
Dungeoned spirits that would be free.

Bird like music, and love, and morning,
Day's forerunner, eternal joy !
Thou and all wings that beat are scorning
Man, too heavy with sad alloy.

Thee no sorrow old age is bringing,
Joy for ever from bowy lips
Throws thee kisses, and Ocean's singing
Thrills thy pennons' tremulous tips.

Thou art the same as birds that folded
Wings on the wave of a winsome world ;
Thine delirious motion moulded
Under the winds at dawning hurled.

And for ever thy path is Fancy's,
Seas, the sun, and the clouds thy peers ;
And like echoes of old romances
Thou recallest our careless years.



FAVONIUS



FAVONIUS from the setting sun,
Sigh, sigh not so upon her tresses !
What though thou diest in the dun,
She trembled at thy mute caresses.

The rose shall lose her diadem,
The nightingale shall weep his singing,
And Love shall hear his requiem
From bells that Sorrow sets a-ringing.

Delight is alway in the earth,
From soul to soul a meteor flying,
And as some spirit gives it birth
Some other spirit feels it dying.



FAINTLY I hear forgotten bells
Upon the mountain side where dwells
The secret brook that poured for me
An oracle of days to be.

Ah! bells that trembled holy joy
Into the soft heart of the boy,
Ah! brook that whispered of a God
Where'er you melted through the sod:

Come to me with your ancient dower,
Dew me with the mysterious power,
Restore the melody of faith
That once to me was more than death!

In vain I call—ye cannot tell:
And I no more from brook or bell
Take to my soul delicious rest
And find a God within my breast . . .



AKAROA HEADS

The
West Wind



H! what a solitude is all around
The hermit sea, the splintered cliff that falls
In altars on eternal pedestals
That make the wilderness a holy ground!
Yet surely do I hear an ancient sound,

Barbaric worship in these massy walls,
Souls bared to heaven where now the seamew calls,
Wild rapture where is now a death profound.

Oh! may my spirit never fail to soar
Far from the foamy fabric of the brine
And all the shallow coil that cumpers Life,
Lest I be like this desolated shore,
For ever fretted, and for ever strife,
A soul whose altars are no more divine.



CAPE RAOUL, TASMAN'S PENINSULA



CAR, ever frowning to the Southern pole
Over a sullen ocean, thou hast seen
Splendour of God and devilry of men,
Earthquake and tempest, and the stubborn
soul

Of the oppressor; now thou art a scroll
Where Time has writ the fury that has been,
And thou for solace on the clouds dost lean,
From their full utterance gathering a soft toll.

The surges at thy base for ever thunder,
The piping winds like haggard spirits wail,
And from afar the melancholy main,
Tinged as if Sorrow's palace was thereunder,
Yearns to thee for its solitary pain
Unsoothed by the magic of a sail.



HE waves come flawless from the hand of
God,

Fresh and for ever new, and all the Ocean
Folds from the orient ecstasy's emotion
As if Divinity for ever trod

Upon the infinite purple deep and broad;
And every billow pours its one devotion
To die upon the shore in perfect motion,
White, chaste, and shadowless in its last abode.

We, miserable, fallen on a time
Too much o'erwrought and prematurely old,
And only knowing Grief is each day's friend,
Do but despairingly adore the chime
Of the wild surges, chanting without end
Secrets of joy to human ears untold.



HUSH !



ILENCE, for slumber of the children's eyes :
Let not a footfall or a voice be heard,
Nor any sound break on the muffled word
That babbles of their dreaming mysteries !
Far, far beyond us, in a land that lies

Round infancy, their tender souls are stirred,
Flushed with the rapture of a soaring bird
Escaping heavenward with a wild surprise.

Thus would I sleep at last beneath the turf,
A temple by the ever-sounding sea,
All else a stillness, while my soul should be
Showered with the flame of a celestial light
Beyond the farthest constellation's curve,
Encompassed only by the infinite.

A DIRGE

The
West Wind



OME not with Sundered flowers to strew her
grave;

Nor be there any curtain but the grass,
Dewed by the Night and by the winds that
pass

Tranced with the slumber of the level wave ;
Or if one cloud of the empyrean nave
Shall float a shadow on her shrouded face,
Be it the shrine of this mysterious place,
Bestowing shelter she for ever gave :
And if the anthem of this holy rood
Fall from the throat of some forgotten bird,
Faint with the press of heaven upon his wings,
Be it the bruised fragrance that is stirred
In the sad heart, remembering happier things
That are the angels of this solitude.



TO A SEA-SHELL



RIEND of my chamber—O thou spiral shell
That murmurest of the ever-murmuring sea !
Repeating with eternal constancy
Whatever memories the wave can tell ;
Whatever harmonies may rise and swell,

Whatever sadness in the deep may be :
They are the Ocean's, and desired of thee ;
Thou treasurest what thou dost love so well.

So all my heart is one voluted fold,
Shielding one face, and evermore it seems
Upon the threshold of the prying Day,
Hid in the tangle of reluctant dreams ;
And in the noontide, and the evening grey,
Its light illumines secrecies untold.



WATERFALL that fallest to the sea,
Falling for ever to white virginals
Of olden melody! thy voice I hear
In molten moments of the summer stars
When the great sun is dead in majesty.

From the white fields of home like thee I came
Impetuous to the cliffs, and I have poured
Treasure of love on altars cold, as thou
Hast showered thy rainbow on the icy rocks,
That have not felt thy kiss,—and I would die.

Athwart the hollows of the moon-fed air
Come eider tremors of thy dying plunge,
Surceasing as child-tired eyelids droop
Upon a wavy bosom, rocked with love
Poured from the heaven for ever like thy song.

The moon is kissing thy keen diadem,
Sick for her barrenness, and all her face
Creeps to thy white arc down the precipice,
As I have nestled, yearning with wild eyes,
Into the umber chancels of a soul.





THOU wilt come with suddenness,
Like a gull between the waves,
Or a snowdrop that doth press
Through the white shroud on the graves;
Like a love too long withheld,
That at last has over-welled.

What if we have waited long,
Brooding by the Southern Pole,
Where the towering icebergs throng,
And the inky surges roll :
What can all their terror be
When thy fond winds compass thee ?

They shall blow through all the land
Fragrance of thy cloudy throne,
Underneath the rainbow spanned
Thou wilt enter in thine own,
And the glittering earth shall shine
Where thy footstep is divine.





He : If I should say—

“It may be in the dreamful pas-
A shadow land, some cloudy bay,
Upon the utmost verges cast,
Our spirits had ethereal play.”

She : I should say, “Nay.”

He : If I should say—

“Sweetest and fairest, we have been
Communicate in fairy lands
Where drowsy winds do lull between
The tangled hours of silken strands,
And all the magic we have seen
That Love has folded in his hands.”

She : I should say, “Nay.”

She : And this to you—

“The Morning from her gossamer woof
Throws on my heart her innocence,
And bids the stars that fade aloof
Leave me their flamed magnificence,
Molten and evermore serene
In a mysterious depth profound,
For my woman’s heart that late hath been
By Love’s soft-searching plummet found ;
And when the evening clouds arise,
Scarlet and threaded with the gold,
They are the sphered land unrolled
Within my happy-haunted eyes ;
And when the dewes are on the flowers
For thee, for thee, my heart embowers
A spiritual paradise,
That ne’er has floated on a sea.”
If you should say all this to me,
As I to you,
It would be true.



REAMS in the glamour of an old romance
 Woven around a perilous love forlorn;
 Fond eyes that yearn upon the waves' expanse
 For a wan sail in shadowy gulfs outworn;
 A sad princess immured long vacant years,
 Waiting for love in some forgotten keep
 Untenanted by anything but tears,
 Unvisited by anything but sleep.

Where are ye fled, O passionate, wild days?
 Where is your magic that was wont to be
 Flushed on the summits in the morning rays
 And in the twilight of the western sea?
 Where are the hearts that thrilled for Rosalind?
 Where are the eyes that Celia has blest?
 Why do we beat the air for ever dinned
 With the great anguish of a great unrest?

Return, O Time! the jewels thou hast thieved:
 Though Shakespear come not (he is a caress
 For the fond spirit) surely we have grieved
 Even enough to move a god's distress:
 Return the ark of life, the large domain
 Over all gaiety, the wine, the song:
 Even if Pan shall never rule again,
 May we not smile at life, alert and strong?

If every leaf within the wild Ardennes,
 If every brook that babbles to the deer
 Murmurs the charm that lulled the forest glens,
 Shall we not sit, and dream, and love, and hear?
 Sweetness and light to spirits that are dim,
 Sad with the whole of querulous excess,
 Float with the music of the sylvan hymn
 Lost in Joy's rosy-tangled wilderness.



If it be foul or be fair—
If the wind has bewildered the hours
With eternal despoil of the flowers,
Or a calm has encompassed the air
Like the moon rising slow over towers,
It is tryst-day, and I shall be there.

As I pass by the moss-girdled posts
A butterfly wavers beyond,
Slow piloting green shoals and coasts
Of branches whose blossoms respond
To the glance of my soul with a scent
That for Love its arcana has spent.

If Love's shadow lay over the Rose,
Then the sun were no more her desire :
So my Heart with its melody goes
From the world to the shade of the briar,
Where a bird that has fluttered the field
In his flight folds of joy has unreeled.

.

O Heart! so full of sunshine and of rain,
Joy and pain,
The cloud pavilions of the gods are strewn
With the moon,
A canopy for Love that trailing bends
Tasselled ends . . .

All the light that palpitates through fretted waves
Into caves,
All the songs the mermaids sing where the weeds
Are their bredes,
All the magic of the turret cliffs that sleep
In the deep,—

All are gathered in the cloudy tents above,
Dear, and Love
Who irradiates the lowliest and least
Is their priest;
And he beckons down his blessing if we twin
Enter in . . .



FIDELIS



FIDELIS was the word,
A rosebud smile the wand
To touch my soul that stirred
All ecstasy beyond,
Like a soaring bird.

The bird is in the skies,
My heart was even there,
Where Summer's cradle lies
Rocked by a secret air
Slipped from Paradise.

The Summer light it goes,
The bird away it flies,
And Love is one with those :
The rose that never dies
Never was a rose.



TO AN OLD FRIEND

STATELY tree,

Where ivy wanders round the bole,
And you may hear the midnight sea
Moan in its caverns like a soul
Chastened by adversity.

Old storms have swept
Fair branches of a younger day ;
The melancholy wind has wept
The homeless hours in tears away
While the timorous birds have slept.

But in the Spring
Come feathered warblers from the sound
Of coral foam, and many a wing
Waves nestling sympathy around,
To their old home twittering.

And as each bird
Pipes the full treble of the South
The branches tremble in a blurred
Faint echo, as a human mouth
Falters notes by memory stirred.

So I, a youth,
Come to you with a Spring-tide voice
To whisper an endearing truth :
The aged heart may best rejoice
Knowing clearer heavenly ruth.

And I will take
From my full cruse a placid balm
To scatter on pale Memory's wake,
And you shall feel a summer calm,
Happy for the giver's sake.

And you shall be
My shelter from Youth's troublous wind:
When all my soul is agony,
Deepest trustful I shall ever find
In your heart a roof for me.

The
West Wind



BY THE SEA



AY is at noon, and one cloud,
A glory of snowy rings,
Over the city is bowed,
Poised on ethereal wings,
Like a stainless spirit and proud
Scorning earthly things.

The sea is about my feet,
Folding in shallow waves
Music as sad and sweet
As a bruised spirit craves,
Like voices when angels meet
Over children's graves.

But the flower of my soul's content
Not the cloud, nor the sea,
With all their loveliness blent,
Can restore unto me;
For the flower of my soul with its scent
Is with thee—with thee!



F old a King of Tempe,
The garden of the blest,
Who wooed and won the Naiads
Where sun and shade caressed,
Of full fruition wearied,
Like reeds that never rest.

O, all my trusty sages!
My soul is parched as brine
That spouts above the daggers
Of reefs where palely shine
The bones of men and galleys
That greenly intertwine.

And all my soul is weary
Before the Sun is hurled
Upon the azure arches
That span the sovran world,
And ere he dips his splendour
My sail of Hope is furled.

Go! seek a magic potion
Repeating all the boy;
The music of the surf-beat
No more is perfect joy,
And scarce my blood can tingle
To hear the song of Troy!

In vain Thessalian leaders,
The captains of the sword,
Have turned the Sibyl pages
Where all that is is stored;
No shining of contentment
Illumes the sacred hoard.

Through all the groaning ages,
The travail and the fret,
The path to Joy's dominions
No mortal foot has met . . .
*Still, for all despairings,
Love is seeking yet !*



TO AN OLD NORSE BROOCH



HEART has throbb'd beneath thee, thou
hast felt
A baby's fingers shadowed by the lips
That shed a mother's love on lips that spell
Soft cooings lost in exquisite eclipse ;

And thou hast seen the Norseman on the wave,
And heard the echo of his magic horn
League-floated from some cloud-begirt fiord,
The monumental grave
Of paladins who faced the foe with scorn,
And perished by the lightning of the sword !

But now to alien eyes in thine old age
Thou art on Time's long strand a shell forlorn,
Cast up beyond the travail and the rage,
Whence to the spirit ear soft sounds are borne :
Dumb oracles of phantasy that break
Through all the rank, cold world into the soul,
To teach us that the meanest thing may be

A parable to take
Our being to its visionary goal,
A symbol of love's immortality !



HIS happy realm, this pleasant fief,
Where summer suns and winter snows
Come without tallage or relief,
And free to everything that grows,
Beneath the unwavering rule and wise
Looks up to the benevolent skies
Like children to their mother's eyes.

Withdrawn from all the motley rout
In lassitude's delicious rest,
My grateful eyes do move about
This little kingdom of the blest:
I watch some windy-troubled stem,
And think of sorrows that condemn
Pale men without, and pity them.

Aloof the tireless city's hum :
Only a wandering bough is heard,
Or haply when its note is dumb
The plaint of a monastic bird :
It is my very soul awakes
This solitude, a light that shakes
Infinite glory in its flakes.

Remembrances of regions dim
Before this lower life was known,
Of music neither song nor hymn,
But sensuous loveliness alone ;
Splendours that played about my head,
Twined with the love the mother shed
And sanctified it ere they fled.

Here is no fretfulness or grief :
The violet and rose are twins
In happiness: the dulcet leaf
At dawn her ecstasy begins ;

For ever as the seasons roll
Unburdened by the mystic dole,
The sad endowment of the soul.

The
West Wind

Oh, placid, sweet encouragement!
I gather from your fond parterre
A treasury of solace lent
That ye do scatter every where;
The perfect fulness that I see,
The showered music—all may be
An echo of eternity!



REVERIE



IVE me a reed from lyric Arcady
Of softest music: bid the birds to sing
Of all that is divine, the flowers, the sea,
Dim glades of forest for the weary wing,
Murmurs of rivulets: and let me be

One of the choir, that I may pour a song
Ripe from a heart that is untouched with Age,
Rich with the perfumes that to Youth belong,
Of what is never writ in lettered page,
But only whispered with a faltering tongue . . .

And as I conjure up one fairest face
No more the birds and forest shall be there,
No more the rivulets shall flow apace,
I shall forget all other, everywhere
Ever shall see her eyes in sunny place!

The
West Wind

PARTED



I was not in the morning
Or evening that we met,
No land the world adorning
Was round about us set,
But we remember yet!

Wild roses were the border
That girdled all the land:
Dear Love in sweet disorder
Had dropped them from his hand,
Like Time's deceiving sand.

Were dryads tryst a-keeping?
Were fauns afoot with Pan?
Were Pain and Sorrow sleeping
As when the world began,
As Love itself began?

The swans have flown asunder
On Love's secluded lake,
His star is muffled under
Clouds that will not break . . .
Oh! Sweet, for old love's sake!



MY ROSE

The
West Wind



FT in a garden I have found
A rose that nestled to the sound
Of waterfalls from shadowy hills,
Flown across the hidden rills,
Music that has sweeter been
That its cradle is unseen.

She upon her slender perch
Wavers to bird bills that search
In her coronet for beads
Showered from Eve's dusky brede,
While some coppice-hidden bird 'll
Scatter round her for a girdle
Tangles of his throbbing soul
For some poet to unroll.
From her petals I have drawn
Incense waiting for the dawn,
Or to float upon the rain
If the South wind come again.
To my lips each petal lies
Limpid as my dearest's eyes,
Eyes more beautiful by far
Than the glow of evening star,
When her aureole is strewn
Underneath the sickle moon;
Then I leave her in the gloom,
Swooning to her own perfume.
Ah, my Spirit! when I come
As the next day neareth home,
And my rose, of all the brood,
Hath been plucked by fingers rude! . .
Thou, that art an opening bud,
By each spirit to be wooed
That cherisheth the ancient lore,
To love, and to love evermore,

The
West Wind

The beautiful!—oh, that I could
With thee inherit solitude!
But afar my steps must go;
Thou, perhaps, wilt never know
The fullness of my quiet pain,
Aching, that when I come again,
Thou, of all rosebuds diadem,
Mayst have been taken from thy stem . . .



ADRIFT



HE weary, slow, unfolding wave
Lips the dim softness of the cave,
Whispering the chancel of the sea
How sweet it is in peace to be.

Ah, witchery of dying hours!
Oh, pain of adamant powers!
That draw the full, reluctant tide
From where its slumber would abide.

Thus have I dreamt to dwell with thee,
But thou hast said it may not be,
And now I drift for evermore
Far from thy soul's secluded shore.

For thine could never make return:
Love's lonely vigil did but learn
To show thee, dearest one, in vain
Its incommunicable pain.



FAR in some forgotten wood
 Whose only worshippers, the clouds,
 Poise in a stately interlude
 Above the topmost leafy shrouds,
 To listen to a waterfall
 That winnows slumber thro' the pines . . .
 There was thy cradle placed, and all
 Thy radiance around them shines.

To thee no Naiad oaring pressed
 The rich reeds of a sacred stream,
 Nor ibis of revered nest
 Sailed in a melancholy gleam
 Of moated stillness, like a dream
 Wherein a swarthy queen lay hid
 In blood-cemented pyramid :

Nor any wreath of cannon-smoke
 Clung to old palaces and towers ;
 But, best for thee, the Forest spoke,
 To tell the secret to the flowers
 That thou wert born, and evermore
 The wave that wandered to the shore
 Was free as thou wert, and no more.

Ah ! something of their sap has crept
 Into thy being : thou hast grown
 Where balmy sun and winter kept
 A shadowy tryst with thee alone :
 Thou hast the wildness of the wood,
 The dim enchantment of the creek ;
 And surely somewhere thou hast stood
 Where God himself vouchsafed to speak . . .

The
West Wind

Thy sweet elusive spirit dwells
Amid the far-suspended South,
And there thy lonely passion tells
Its pain upon thy dreamy mouth :
For ever on the mountain side
The snow imprisoned, and the tide
That is eternally denied
The shore, aloof with thee abide.

Perhaps on thy revealing face
The shadows of the unforeseen
Have left too deep for joy their trace ;
But ah ! thy tender heart may lean
To those that bore the storm and stress,
But soothed from Sorrow all her grace
Thy land of fading tears to bless !



KITTY TO MADGE



ADGE ! ” said Kitty, with a sigh,

“ Yesterday my fancy led
Life of careless tyranny,
Soft to everyone but Ted.

“ Rose a moment of white flame
When his eyes looked into mine,
And my heart said with acclaim,
‘ Love ! for ever I am thine. ’ ”

So the river runs a-cold
Many a morrow, but to be
Snowy elements unrolled
In the warm heart of the Sea.

“AT EVENTIDE IT SHALL BE LIGHT”

The
West Wind



S daylight fading, Margaret?

Are those the bells of eventide?

Does Darkness gather in her net

The stars that in the sunbeams hide?

The children's voices, are they not

Hushed in the garden's dewy breath

To whisper in some far-off spot

The simple things of love and death?

Your hand is cold, my Margaret,

Your eyes are dim through stealthy tears,

Ah, all my soul with grief is wet

To know you not in all these years!

Sweet, now too late I see in vain

Your heart was poured to shallow mould

That could not hold it: once again

Kiss me, and let me lie a-cold . . .





ISING, falling,

All the azure day upon the wind,
Tripping to the note-betangled calling
Of the birds and rivulets entwined
As they would pour their spirit to the
fairy kind.

Ever growing
To the girdled fullness of a bloom,
With odours of the elfins overflowing,
Petally cascades of faint perfume
That fall upon the mould and thread the violet's tomb.

Comes the swallow
With a lullaby from the sleepy brooks,
Shaking from his pennons echoes hollow
Snatched ere they could leave the lotus nooks
To lull the vigil gleaner flitting through the stooks.

He will never
Twitter of the languor and the pain
That from the light we never can dis sever,
And all a-night the sob-subdued brain
Twines in a fevered mesh day's agony again.

On the mortals
Is the darkness of a molish way,
Unfathomed the secret of the portals
That bar the vista of the fruitful day :
We pine for other light, we loathe our pallid ray :

And we ponder
On the time to be, and we would fain
Lay down the yoke we bear, afresh to wander,
As thou wilt shed thy fullness in the rain
To sleep a little while, then be a bud again.

THE THREE ISLANDS

The
West Wind



OW blest these islands of the morn,
The diadem of lonely seas
Where the Almighty's smile is born
To follow westward with the breeze :
For first on us the light of God
Each matin from the heaven is bowed,
Swift as the fury of the sword,
Soft as the rainbow in the cloud !

Around us are white-woven waves
That ne'er have felt a tyrant's keel,
That roll above old heroes' graves
To thunder in a breaking peal ;
And overhead the snowy scars,
Where never foot of man hath clomb,
Point to the everlasting stars
That lustre all the Southern dome.

Glad rivers from the forest flow
Or fall in frolic from the peaks,
In myriad flowers our spirits know
The sweetness of Jehovah speaks ;
And through the woods low murmurs run,
Blent voices from the circle sea
That whisper we and they are one,
Bred of the ocean, and as free !

The thunder of the moa's gorge
Shall be our answer to the foe ;
As sparks that feather from the forge
Our souls shall rise in battle's glow :
So Peace shall wreathe our iron capes
That frown defiance to the foam
That smites with fury and escapes
In hissing ruin to its home !



SAW you by the border of the ocean,
Seated upon a rock in pensive mood,
Lulled by the anthem of the mind's devotion
To the enamelled beauties of the flood
Swaying itself in tessellated motion

With lips that sang a Spring beatitude,
Foam notes awakened by the virgin seas
Sent to you by the Oceanides!

What do they murmur on the pebbles' umber?
What is the vision of your steadfast eyes?—
Planets that rest them in half-lidded slumber
Poised to the spirit's wayward melodies—
Songs of the soul, where Memory loves to number
The white-waked days long lost beneath the skies
That drop no more their balmy overflow
That bathed our very being, long ago.

What are you weaving to the foamy pealing
Ten thousand wavelets ring about your feet?
Are you beneath the emerald curve concealing
The paven grotto where the mermaids meet?
Or is your fancy with the seagull wheeling
In a white wealth of cloud, where he may greet
The steepy sun-shower from the empyrean hurled
Ere it has kissed and warmed the torpid world?

Can the grey-pennoned cares of life embarrass
Your sunny soul, sweet Myra, this fair morn?
Did all a-night the dead Day's travail harass
Till the tired eyelids lashed themselves outworn?
Has Sorrow's breath bestirred the silken arras
That sheltered from the outer bleaks forlorn,
And do the wavelets murmur on the shore
That flawless ecstasy returns no more?

Look downward, Myra ! to the veined flitting
Of kisses of the Sun upon the Strand :
Dark is the ooze, but ever intermitting
Swim the gold tangles o'er the furrowed sand ·
So the dread Fates a double thread are knitting,
Weaving for each a parti-coloured band
That shall unroll itself, as Time shall flow,
Into a ravelled skein of joy and woe.

Look, Myra ! how the little waves are creeping
About the rock you linger on bemused :
Do you not see the little fishes peeping
Into your eyes with reverie infused ?
Do you not hear the tiny breakers cheeping
About the granite in a whirl confused ?—
While the blue crystal eddying about you
Mirrors your face, and cannot move without you.

Myra, melilla, see therein a token
Of the still mirror fixed in my soul :
Where'er thou art, thine image falls unbroken
On my delighted spirit,—as a knoll
Of solemn curfew through the shadows spoken
Trembles upon the fields in drowsy dole,
Bringing the slumbrous calm of tranquillness,
As thou dost ripe my heart with blessedness.

List, Myra ! to the little breeze that bloweth
Round thy soft-conched ear : oh ! hearken still
To my fond secret that Favonius knoweth,
And whispers with his own soft-tongued skill :
Come shoreward, Myra ! where the seaweed floweth
Into a font of granite-curven sill,
And by its waters mirroring the skies
Pour on me the deep heaven of thine eyes !

The
West Wind



HANS ANDERSEN

EAR master of the faint flute of the herbs,
The crystal revel of the stream that flows
By magic furrows where the wind disturbs
Rich, drony moths upon the plaited rose:
Alone thou hearest where the wild swan dips
His crest beneath the torrent of the morn!
Alone thou seest from his tender lips
The sun's last smile to fairy Matterhorn!

The nightingale, thou in the forest spent
Her lovely soul in music for a lord
Of empyr, distilling bland content,
Threw all herself to thee as thou adored:
She is not of the earth, and thou art free
From low communion, like her quivering wings
That ache for all despair that song can be—
Th' impenetrable heart of sacred things.

Through thee the lowliest do achieve renown,
The unsought grace of solitude is theirs,
But thou dost give such eremites a crown,
From thee they take our happiness and tears;
What if the violet lean athwart a stone,
And hear but rivulet or nightingale—
Her secrecies surprised by thee alone
Shall charm young hearts in immemorial tale.

What largesse of all magic! Does the bird
Lament thee in her thicket? Shall her note
Fall where alone a stealthy leaf is stirred
By sleeping castle in a sleepy moat,
And never heart be there her song to tell,
Nor any cunning weaver of her brain?
Shall we for ever watch the citadel,
And never see the sanctuary again?

SAINT HUBERT

The
West Wind



OMRADES, to the woodlands come !

Thrice afar the tasselled horn
Pours a soul's elysium
Thro' the white wake of the morn.

Thrice the buck has hearkened still,
Buried in the umber shades ;
Thrice the gleby-wandering rill
Answers ere the bugle fades.

Over yonder granite peak,
Circled with a fleecy film,
Leaps the glad sun's flaming streak,
Kissing all his verdured realm.

Unpremeditated hymns
Pour from feather-throated choirs,
Every note with joy o'erbrims,
Every heart to soar aspires !

Thrice afar the tasselled horn
Pours a soul's elysium
Through the white wake of the morn—
Comrades, to the woodlands come !



The
West Wind

DEAD !



SILENT, silent, when the dawn
Through the ashen room is drawn,
And it lingers on thy face,
Counterfeiting a fled grace !

As the shadows slip away
To the meadow of the day,
Does not thy persistent heart
Yearn to all its wonted part ?

All the fond, vibrating bars
From the flame of viewless stars
Will not ope the fretted lid
Where thy lovely soul was hid.

Though thou liest there so still
God has shown thee all His will,
And His universe is whole
Unto thy expanding soul.

Thou hast fled from love and moan,
Little children here alone
Stumble for the lamp of love
Thou didst bring them from above.





BREAK as all vows of love that unabides,
 Roll on thy strand the slow, smooth arch
 that gleams
 With fettered magic of the girdling tides
 And the ungathered glories of youth's
 dreams;

Pierce thy green depths on rocks that are a-cold,
 Touch with thy rainbow curve this lonely shore,
 But even as thou diest, oh! unfold
 The voices I have heard, and hear no more.

O Sanctuary! whose eternal foam
 Drapes for thanksgiving pedestals profound
 Sunk in the depths,—whose altar tops are home
 For the white clouds,—shed on me what was wound
 In the young years about my heart, and rolled
 Through all my being, a celestial sense . . .
 Love that still lips and shuttered eyes have told,
 Smiles that elude sad Memory's impotence!

Then thy too solemn dirge shall softly float
 Upon the muted strings of Memory's pain,
 As a tired wind that fades upon a moat
 Too still to welcome its secluded rain;
 And if one tremor shall recall a throb
 Long buried in old graves, oh! Lord, how sweet
 To feel thy benediction in a sob,
 And see thee in the tears about my feet . . .

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NOTE

Of these verses *Myra* was published in *The Press*, Wellington. *The West Wind*, *At Her Gate*, *To My Dog*, *A Swallow in Maoriland*, *Asleep*, *On the Cliff*, *Retro-spection*, *To a Seagull*, *Doubt*, *Akaroa Heads*, *Cape Raoul*, *Sinclair Head*, *A Dirge*, *To a Sea-Shell*, *Bowen Falls*, *Spring in Maoriland*, "*As You Like It*," *Tryst*, *Fidelis*, *To an Old Friend*, *By the Sea*, *Reverie*, *Parted*, *My Rose*, *Adrift*, *Kitty to Madge*, *At Eventide It Shall Be Light*, *The Three Islands*, *A Vigil*, *Hans Andersen*, *St. Hubert*, *Dead*, *Ode*, and the *Introductory Verses*, were published in *The Bulletin*. The remaining pieces are now first published.

ERRATA

It is regretted—

On page xxvi, *To an Old Friend*, line 10, *birds* should be *buds*.

On page xxix, *To an Old Norse Brooch*, line 4, *spell* should be *spelt*.

A Personal Note



UBERT CHURCH was born at Hobart, Tasmania, 13th June, 1857. His father, Hubert Day Church, M.A. and barrister, came from English Somerset, and was a descendant of John Hampden's family. Hubert Church was educated in England (1865-1872) at Guildford, Felstead, and Oxford University. An accident in cricket caused severe deafness, and ended his English school life. He came to Maoriland in 1873, and for several years studied law. In 1879 he entered the Government service in the Treasury department at Wellington, where he resides.

The verses included in this booklet represent the greater portion of Church's poetical work; for he writes only at an impulse, and the impulse is soon exhausted. The longest of the omitted pieces is entitled "An Ode on the Decay of the Maori Race," and is not without excellence, though it does not reach the comparative perfection of most of the verses here given, which nearly all have been chosen by the author to represent his talent at its highest.

The charm of Hubert Church's verse is a charm of slow, unfolding sweetness, of suave and mellow grace. The refinement of his mind attenuates the force of his expression,—the force of his emotion, it may be. His poems move quietly and naturally to their close, expanding harmoniously as flowers that bud and bloom in peace to gently fade and fall, scented petal after petal. Without being great poetry, they bring to the *Quiet Life* many lines, many images which are greatly poetic, in that their influence comes with music and abides like the odours of old balsams, fragrant and healing.

A.G.S.

DAWNWARD?



Portrait of
Bernard O'Dowd



Dawnward?

Bernard O'Dowd



" WITHOUT EDIFICES OR RULES OR ANY ARGUMENT
THE INSTITUTION OF THE DEAR LOVE OF COMRADES "



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AUSTRALIA

*L*AST sea-thing dredged by sailor Time from Space,
Are you a drift Sargasso, where the West
In halcyon calm rebuilds her fatal nest?
Or Delos of a coming Sun-God's race?
Are you for Light, and trimmed, with oil in place,
Or but a Will o' Wisp on marshy quest?
A new demesne for Mammon to infest?
Or lurks millennial Eden 'neath your face?

*The cenotaphs of species dead elsewhere
That in your limits leap and swim and fly,
Or trail uncanny harp-strings from your trees,
Mix omens with the auguries that dare
To plant the Cross upon your forehead sky,
A virgin helpmate Ocean at your knees.*

To Young Democracy



HAT reddish veil which o'er the face
Of night-hag East is drawn . .
Flames new disaster for the race ?
Or can it be the Dawn ?

Those mutterings horizonward . .
What destinies are there ?
Do organed Hopes triumphant chord,
Or thunders roar "Despair" ?

What gifts are those the clouds release
As far ahead they scud ?
Are they the genial rains of Peace,
Or deluges of blood ?



Our motley masses struggle slow
'Mid wilderness, through sands ;
Our flags with fetish watchwords glow
Above the gloomy bands.

Three watchwords ! Will they glorify,
Or weave us fates more stark ?
Lead downward from this lowering sky,
Or downward to the dark ?

Will "Freedom !" over Athens' scrolls
Our greater glory carve ?
Or prove mere choice to sell our souls
To Mammon or—to starve ?

Content with Freedom's forms, shall we
Real tyranny caress,
Through sybaritic apathy
Or mad forgetfulness ?

Dawnward ?

“Equality ! ” Will each a king
Become, a seer, a sage ?
Or will it ruthless all men fling
In cosmic helotage ?

Will crucibles, wherein, tho’ great
With primal vice, we pour
Equalities, precipitate
Napoleons—as before ?

“Fraternity ! ” Will black and white
As brothers mingle, or,
Surcharged with lust of carnage, plight
The bloody troths of war ?

While prudent churches neutral watch
The conflict of the twain,
Will Wealth his brother Want despatch,
An everlasting Cain ?



While heedless on our masses move,
Their sad-eyed mystics see
On rushing Cloudland’s stage above
Dark hints of what may be.

Palladium and Shibboleth
Pose on each misty dome :
Red Crisis’ tableaux blotch with death
Smug Order’s monochrome.

Race-ogres here on vulture-cloud,
And there race-fathers hie ;
And Then and Now and Will-Be crowd
The pantomimic sky.

Prophetic 'mid the whirlwind flow
 These cryptic figures steal :
 Are they to be for further woe,
 Or may they be for weal ?

Will turbaned Shem, revived, through sweet
 White women filtered long,
 With sober scowl triumphant meet
 The drunken Western throng ?

Will Ham, acquit of servile strain,
 Of art and craft compact,
 A loathing Europe's pallor stain—
 Democracy in *fact* ?

Will Japhet still his brothers lead
 Unto the shambled tryst,
 With tentacles of trading greed
 And drivel of his Christ ?

Will Gog, awaked, his Huns outpour
 At empire-breaking time,
 To sluice away our fame and lore,
 Our features and—our crime ?



Scrolls, written "Debt," and "Wanton War,"
 And "Sterile Love," flare high :
 Are these our *Mene ! Mene !* or
 Illusions of the sky ?

"Majority !" Divorced from wise,
 Sad Conscience, will he prowl
 Through tender, human heresies
 With Torquemadan scowl ?

Dawnward ?

And "Comfort !" Will her siren song
To narcotising shades
Seduce our veterans, while Wrong
Our weaker frontiers raids ?

Will "Sport" educe a virile pith,
Our pulses teach to throb ?
Or weary earth re-saddle with
A Nika-riot mob ?

Will centre-seeking "Culture" hold
Tangential Passion's bolt ?
Yield orbits of an Age of Gold,
Or comets of Revolt ?



Yet, foodless oft and homeless, we
Not hopeless, loveless, plod—
Whither ? To Failure's midnight sea
Or downward ? Ay, to God ?

Who will may see, on plains around,
By scanty rivers crossed,
Where only weedy growths abound,
The camp-fires of the Lost.

To feed the flame, the twigs and cones
From dying Hopes we tear ;
And wolfish Angers gnaw the bones
Of dead Ideals there.

To drown your glory in the dark,
O children of the Light !
The frail, the crushed, the fell, the stark
Deploy their hosts to-night.

Anon a stern-lipped watcher flings
Remorseless to the flame
The effigies of sacred things
Or bric-a-brac of Fame.

Grim scouts o'erleap your city's walls,
Cast potions in your wells,
With leprous patches taint your halls,
And mine your citadels.

Your timid treasurers await
The onset of our need :
The myriad tramp his lonely hate
Is whetting on his greed.

Your serfs grimacing flout your cries
Of "honour," "law" and "trust,"
Your lily women recognise
The prowling lips of lust.

Dawnward ?

Your veil of Art, by free winds tossed,
Is rending as you look—
Your Art—which claimed to love the Lost,
And jeered them, and forsook.

Your brutal Science sends a corps
Of derelicts to train
With formulas of lethal lore
Our nascent rebel brain :

And scavengers of learning there,
And outcast lords of rhyme,
Compose us anthems of despair
And polyglots of crime :

And godless phalanxes assist
Our priesthood celebrate
A diabolic eucharist
With chalices of hate.

Your system's ripened fruits appear
In psychopath and sot :
The tiger women wait you here
You soiled and left to rot.

See there ! a squeezed-out sponge of trade,
Or drunkard's, gambler's wife :
And there ! a haggard sempstress spayed
By Competition's knife.

Within your walls anon there shines
A wrecker's signal light,
And falcon-featured Catilines
Sneak to and fro to-night.

Ah, city dwellers! fearful wrong
Entails a fearful cost,
And ye that dare may see who throng
Those bale-fires of the Lost.

Dawnward?



PROSPERITY

Enlaced with gardened jewelry
My basking villas nest
Where sifted sunshine soothes the eve
And cosy hillocks rest.

Convention's fronds here screen from view
Immodest Nature's haunt,
And wizard Distance veils in blue
The haggard peaks of Want.

The millions fast that I may feast,
And drudge that I may play;
But Average, complacent priest,
Condones the wrong away:

Finesse, my statesman, calculates
Subjection's breaking strain,
And Comfort crooning mitigates
The drifting moan of pain.

My sages God's commandments frame
From maxims of the desk:
My Art, from poverty and shame,
Evolves the Picturesque:

Dawnward ?

By glamour haloed, leering Lust
So angel-like appears
That Scruple loses her distrust,
And Innocence her fears.

Secure I lounge upon the shore
Where Anger's breakers throb,
Or, high above the marsh, ignore
Its ague-smitten mob.

The highways to Desire I hold,
And fatten on the fees ;
My hungry Science gathers gold
From limbecks of disease.

Success, my sorcerer, refines
My murder-tainted hoard,
And hides the felon weals and lines
With which my back is scored :

He perfumes from my women's gowns
Their tainted makers' shame ;
In Glory cyclic Wrong he drowns,
And Treachery in Fame.

Who reaches me a stream must ford
Whose poppied waters dim
Old dreams of wielding Freedom's sword
And chanting Freedom's hymn :

Must hold the claims of Discontent
Mere envies of the mass ;
That Life's repose was only meant
To dower the ruling class :

Must learn that Nature weakness scorns,
That God the serfs ignores,

That Toil deserves its crown of thorns,
And Poverty its sores ;

Dawnward ?

That tho' 't is wise with Charity
Torrential Need to dam,
The Hope of Progress is a lie
And Brotherhood a sham.



HATE

I scour the present and the past
In tyrant-hunting raids ;
No weakling in the flocks of caste
My vulture-sight evades.

I scatter panic where the hoards
Of oily Dives breed ;
With treason notch Oppression's swords
And clutch the throat of Greed.

I show the slave dishonour's scab
On daughter or on wife,
And aim the lightning of the stab
That spills the satrap's life.

When titled Fraud with cant deludes
The mob, his neck I strip,
And point where treason's asp protrudes
From print of Eblis' lip.

Dawnward ?

When Liberty salaams to Fate,
I fling her gorging foes
Gold apples labelled "For the Great!"
Till Envy murder grows.

From malted wrongs I brew revolt;
I numb the nerves of Doubt;
Astride Revenge's thunderbolt
I charge Corruption's rout.

When Freedom's legions, wearied, nod,
Relentless on I push.
Although my sister, Love, is God,
I am the burning bush.

And I, who choke with seeding bane
The pasturage of Wrong,
Demand a niche in Freedom's fane,
A verse in Freedom's song.



CUPID

To get recruits for Pain, I use
The bait of Pleasure's lips;
I crimp from soft oblivion crews
For planet coffin-ships.

Lest Father Chaos' rule should cease
I mingle Near with Far;
Afflict alternate years of peace
With progeny of war:

In years of fat increase select
 The victims for the lean,
 And into choicer veins inject
 Infusions of the mean.

In democratic tyranny
 I cleanse the human face
 Of tattoo-marks of low and high,
 The black and white of race :

So mate I handmaid of the vale
 With baron of the height,
 The sable ogre or the pale
 With angel brown or white ;

Yet unity they scarce attain
 When, as your Science knows,
 I rend them into castes again
 And fertile racial woes.

At times I urge to noble ways,
 At times for evil strive :
 But reckless aye for good or base
 If but the race survive.

My only care is that blind Life
 Shall man the world-ship's deck
 In spite of peace, in spite of strife,
 Until its day of wreck.

So that it may I weave as charm
 Protean loveliness,
 The little prides of lace and form,
 The alchemies of dress,

Dawnward ?

Repute's hypnotic pageantry,
The hope of ended strife,
The vision, that is vanity,
Of nobler types of life.

The fruitful kisses of the trees
Wind-wafted to their mates,
The maiden-mother aphides,
The alternating fates

Of jelly-fish, or fluke, or moss,
In higher skies I set
Than wifeless Christ upon His cross,
Or childless Juliet.

So that It live—The Germ ! The Germ !
It matters not to me
If sheep or tiger, man or worm
Earth's victor-captain be.



PROLETARIA

The sunny rounds of Earth contain
An obverse to its Day,
Our fertile Vagrancy's domain,
Wan Proletaria.

From pole to pole of Poverty
We stumble through the years,
With hazy-lanterned Memory
And Hope that never nears.

Wherever Plenty's crop invites
Our pitiful brigades,
Lurk cannoneers of Vested Rights,
Juristic ambushades ;

And here hangs Rent, that squalid cage
Within which Mammon thrusts,
Bound with the fetter of a wage,
The helots of his lusts.

With palsied Doubt as guide, we wind
Among the lanes of Need,
Where meagre Hungers scouting find
But slavered baits of Greed.

The wet-lipped Lamias of Caste,
Awaiting our advance,
Our choicest squadrons' fealty blast
With magic smile and glance :

Delilah-limbed temptations flit
Among our drowsy rows,
And on our willing captains fit
The badges of our foes.

What wonder sometimes if in stealth
Our starker outposts wait,
And, in the prowling eyes of Wealth,
Dash vitriol of Hate ;

Or if our Samsons, ere too late,
Their treasons should make good
By whelming in the temple's fate
Their viper owners' brood !

Dawnward ?

Our polyandrous dam has borne
To Satan and to God
The hordes of Night, the clans of Morn,
That through our valleys plod.

Ah, motherhood of misery
For Christ-child as for pest !
The greater her fertility
The drier grows her breast !

Too many linger on the track :
A few outstrip the time :
Some, God has tattooed yellow, black,
And some disguised with crime.

Art's living archives here abound,
Carraras of Despair,
And those weird masks of Sight and Sound
The Tragic Muses wear.

Tho' blind and dull, 't is we supply
The Painter's dazzling dreams ;
The rolling flood of Poetry
From our dumb chaos streams.

Nay, when your world is over-tired,
And Genius comatose,
Our race, by Nemesis inspired,
Old Order overthrows :

With earthquake-life we thrill your land,
Refill the cruse of Art,
Revitalise spent Wisdom, and—
Resume our weary part.

The palace of successful Guilt
 Is mortared with our shame ;
 On hecatombs of Us are built
 The soaring towers of Fame.

We are the gnomes of Titan works
 Whose throbbings never cease ;
 Our unregarded signet lurks
 On every masterpiece.

The floating isles, that shuttling tie
 All peoples into one
 By adept steersmen's sorcery
 Of magnet, steam and sun ;

Religion's dolmens, Sphinxes, spires,
 Her Biblic armouries ;
 The helot lightning of the wires
 That mesh your lands and seas ;

The viaducts 'tween Near and Far,
 Whereon, o'er range and mead,
 Bacchantic Trade's triumphant car
 And iron tigers speed ;

The modern steely crops that rise
 Where technic Jasons sow :
 —All these but feebly symbolise
 The largesse we bestow.

And our reward ? In this wan land,
 In clientage of Greed,
 Despised, polluted, maimed and banned,
 To wander and—to breed.



RITERION of better, worse,
 Gives me no troubled days:
 I sing as bids the moment's purse
 In epics or in lays.

A love will warm a couplet, and
 A lust another spice ;
 If virtue be not in demand
 I feel no qualms at vice.

I laugh at fogies who maintain
 My conscience I degrade :
 His conscience only writhes in pain
 Whose Muse is underpaid.

They say that Art by God was sent
 To man His thoughts to limn,
 To be perennial testament
 Of Progress and of Him :

That Beauty is but perfect Truth,
 On Space's canvas traced :
 That Truth is Beauty's self, forsooth,
 In soul's perspective placed.

But I have won a poet's name,
 And barter willingly,
 For victuals now, and now for fame,
 This turgid mystery.

And for an equitable fee
 My docile Muse will try
 To prove a tyranny is free,
 Immortalise a lie.

What prudish mobs consider wrong,
 However right it be,
I will denounce in lofty song
 As infamous to me.

Thus, while abuses laugh at Fate
 In amber of my verse,
The voiceless woe must bleeding wait
 Till it can chink a purse.

It may in theory be wrong
 One's duty thus to fly,
To prostitute the gift of song
 For popularity.

But duty will not villas buy,
 Or conscience cosy robes,
Nor is there any reason why
 All poets should be Jobs.

All Art is Art, since it delights,
 And so, with careless lilt,
To sooth Remorse's moody nights
 I sing the joys of Guilt.

How could my women welcome find
 In Fashion's scented nooks,
If, for a craze, I spilt my mind
 In perfect, unread books ?

When War's sensations charm the brain
 Of those who gild my worth,
Shall I impertinent explain
 That War is hell on earth ?

Dawnward ?

Those waifs, leg-ironed to despair!
The ragged corps of Need !
Suppose I drew God's vengeance there,
Would they my poems read ?

If chance has thrown me genius
(Which, well-applied, means cash),
Why should I waste the gift in fuss
O'er democratic trash ?

I much prefer, and so do you,
To scorn and rags and chains,
The pretty moths that flutter to
The tailored man of brains.

Shall I denounce as traitor to
The people he would sell,
The morning rumour-vendor who
Pays Judases so well ?

The soul may have its higher needs
(As if you pay, I'll show),
But he who with the crowd succeeds
Must with its current go.

Successful Vice and Force and Fraud
Can only reach their goals
When such are what the crowds applaud,
And covet in their souls.

So I provide the lust that leads
My maidens hand in hand,
The rich rogue's praise, and war's red deeds—
Because they're in demand.

Tho' dreamers warn of moral death
And ragged Envy brays,
The Moment is my Muse's breath,
The Moment 't is that pays.

Dawnward ?

I'd rather lure one pouting maid
To dalliance with a trill
Than with an epic for my blade
All Future's tyrants kill.

Why should your starveling's whine dismay,
Your sweater's wreck annoy,
When all one's well-titled moments may
Be dedicate to joy ?

You say my race I'm dragging down !
Ha ! With such nymphs a-knee,
With gold and wine and glory's gown,
What is my race to me ?

'T is but a glamoured dawn you seek :
The daylight's here, and now
Its flush is on my lady's cheek,
Its whiteness on her brow.

And as for query notes of doom—
If doom is near : why, drink
With me unto its Sibyl, Gloom,
And to its Sirens wink.



HE City crowds our motley broods,
And plants its citadel
Upon the delta where the floods
Of evil plunge to Hell.

Through fogs retributive, that steam
From ooze of stagnant wrongs,
The towers satanically gleam
Defiance at our throngs.

It nucleates the land's Deceit ;
Its slums our Lost decoy ;
It is the bawdy-house where meet
Lewd Wealth and venal Joy.

Grim wards are here, where Timour Trade
His human cairns uprears :
There, Silent Towers, where girls betrayed
Unseen rot through their years.

The City curbs the wrath that bays
Rebellious in our souls,
By soothing fumes, and pageant days,
And sweet Circean bowls.

With Saturnalia of the Serf
Our discontent it cures ;
Its Fraud, to dalliance of the Turf,
Hysteric Folly lures.

The Babylonian Venus sways
In every city park ;
Her idiot niece, Abortion, plays
Beside her in the dark.

Here, Office fawns fidelity
When stroked by gilded hands ;
In bramble of chicanery
Belated Justice stands.

Dawnward ?

Glîb Sophistry our mobs deludes,
As showman does his beast,
By serving up their whims as foods
From wholesome Wisdom's feast :

From craze to crime they bleating rage,
Pursue what least is wise,
And, stoning the unselfish sage,
Impostors canonise.

At times in free-lance echelons,
Or called, at times, " The State,"
Ubiquitous its myrmidons
Our foison desolate.

Exactions on its counters perch ;
Our marts Commission raids ;
Sleek Simony, behind the Church,
Prepares his ambushades.

Dame Rumour, organised, the Press,
Spirts slander—for a fee ;
Or, masked in Public Welfare's dress,
She gags or dirks the Free.

Great spider intellects here lurk
In bank and in exchange ;
And through the feebler folds of Work
Hyæna sweaters range.

Dawnward ?

Debt's gargoyles 'neath each eave grimace ;
Debt's mildews sour the soil ;
At all there grins a Shylock face :
Round all, Debt's suckers coil.

Here Thrift, with Art obscene endowed,
A sterile haven finds
Where Malthus-Onan's whey-faced crowd
Slink from the genial winds.

The Dead's miasma o'er us creeps ;
Their mandates dull our brains ;
Inheritance, their steward, keeps
The tithes of our demesnes.

Phylacteried ascetics brood
On their precedence here ;
There, Science tampers with our food,
Or taints our atmosphere ;

And Art spurns Poverty, her spouse,
To be the courtesan
Of ogre of the counting-house
Or ribboned Caliban ;

And o'er that hovel-burdened waste
Where Indigence is pent,
The Huns of Property have raced
On withering hoofs of Rent.



Yet not all black our horoscope,
For, urged by Guardian Fates,
On hoyden Disobedience, Hope
Rebellions procreates ;

And awful Exorcists contrive
The potion and the thong
That from the City's breast will drive
Its incubus of Wrong.

Ripe knowledge of our ill and good,
In fellowship of woe,
Makes fertile streams of Brotherhood
From Ego's glacier flow.

The outcast sons of Art and Want
Tyrtaean songs prepare,
To nerve us 'gainst the guns that daunt
From bastioned Mammon's lair.

Self-sacrifice averts His frown,
When, angry, God at last
Our Gadarenian droves adown
Disaster's cliff would cast ;

And those Bohemians of the mist,
Arrayed 'gainst Law, 't would seem,
Are cleansing for the Harmonist
The City of His Dream.

I syllable the thoughts of those
Who bow the knee to me,
In every wilderness where grows
Far-sown democracy.

My crucible with shrewd assay
To statesmanship refines
What docile lightnings haul each day
From crude opinion's mines.

I teach the people what is good
For them and for—my purse :
If vice will aid my livelihood,
Then virtue has my curse.

Impostures simulate the real
When to my loom I hie ;
With threads of truth it can conceal
The shoddy of a lie.

I am the arbiter of style,
And, Caliph-like, decree
That books which question me are vile,
And useless which agree.

Omission is the master-word,
When critics baulk my will,
With which I blunt Exposure's sword
Or Competition kill.

To what they loathe I can compel
My devotees subscribe ;
Can Right distort to spawn of hell
With venom of a jibe.

With silver pieces I can lead,
 From Honour's narrow way,
 Each Judas with a pliant creed,
 A Saviour to betray.

When Privilege would Progress blast,
 Or Nemesis bid wait,
 O'er goodliest fields of Peace I cast
 The tares of racial hate.

The truth, now lopped to fit my bed,
 Now lengthened to a lie,
 I vend; and for my clients' bread
 The slop of Passion's sty.

My fluent myrmidons efface
 A scruple with a jest,
 If broken confidence can grace
 An item with a zest.

Their art astute to sleep beguiles
 The crowd, or to excess,
 With Roman rhetoricians' wiles
 In piquant modern dress.

They haunt the stews where Wealth and Power
 The people's substance waste,
 So that my clients may devour
 The offal of their taste.

As I enjoin, they portion blame,
 At good or evil laugh,
 Profane the blush of wilted shame
 To tint a paragraph.

Dawnward ?

Last week I advertised for sale
The cheapest way to sin,
To-day at victims scourged in gaol
My leader-writers grin.

To Panic, loose-brained mobs I drive
With iterated screams,
Or lull them, when for Right they'd strive,
With lotus-eaters' dreams.

I put the brake on each great Cause
That rolls on selfishness ;
Nay, edit God, whene'er His laws
My favourites oppress.

For scores that Cleons could befog
I can a million sway :
I am the modern Demagogue
In modern Mammon's pay.



YOUNG DEMOCRACY

Hark ! Young Democracy from sleep
Our careless sentries raps :
A backwash from the Future's deep
Our Evil's foreland laps.

Unknown, these Titans of our Night
Their New Creation make :
Unseen, they toil and love and fight
That glamour'd Man may wake.

Knights-errant of the human race,
 The Quixotes of to-day,
 For man as man they claim a place,
 Prepare the tedious way.

They seek no dim-eyed mob's applause,
 Deem base the titled name,
 And spurn, for glory of their Cause,
 The tawdry nymphs of Fame.

No masks of ignorance or sin
 Hide from them you or me :
 We're Man—no colour shames our skin,
 No race or caste have we.

The prognathous Neanderthal,
 To them, conceals the Bruce ;
 They see Dan /Esop in the thrall ;
 From swagmen Christ deduce.

Tho' butt for lecher's ribaldry
 And scarred by woman's scorn,
 In baby-burdened girl they see
 God-motherhood, forlorn.

With them, to racial siredom glides
 The savage we deprave ;
 That eunuch brilliant Narses hides :
 A Spartacus, that slave.

They Jesus find in manger waif ;
 In horse-boys Shakespearehood :
 And earthquake-Luthers nestling safe
 In German miner's brood.

The God that pulses everywhere
 They know fills Satan's veins ;

Downward ?

No felon but they see Him there
Behind His mirror's stains.

'T is theirs Earth's charnel rooms to clear,
And ruthless sweep away
The Lares and Penates dear
To man in his decay.

Their restless energy supplies
Munitions that will wreck
The keeps whence feudal enemies
Our free banditti check.

Their unrelenting wars they wage,
These Furies of the Right,
Where myriad Falsehood's legions rage,
Artilleried by Might;

Where Fashion's stupid iron clamps
Young Innovation's head,
And Law the stalwart Present cramps
In Past's Procrustes-bed ;

Where Pride of learning, substance, blood,
Or prowess in the strife,
Exacts from teeming lowlihood
The lion's share of life ;

Where Gluttony would to the brutes
Degrade his loose-lipped gangs ;
Where Tyranny his venom shoots
From one or million fangs ;

Where Cruelty, in Wisdom's mask,
Piths fame from writhing beasts ;
Where blest is racial Murder's task
By Christ's apostate priests.

In Punic or in Persian fray
 With Love's and Conscience' foes,
 Unadvertising Romans they,
 And Spartans free from pose.

Abused as mad or traitors by
 The trolls they would eject ;
 Cold-shouldered by wan Apathy ;
 Of motives mean suspect ;

Outcast from social gaieties ;
 Denied life's lilled grace ;
 They mount their hidden Calvaries
 To save the human race.

The bowers of Art a few may know :
 A few wait highly placed :
 Most bear the hods of common woe,
 And some you call disgraced.

But whether in the mob or school,
 In church or poverty,
 They teach and live the Golden Rule
 Of Young Democracy :—

*“ That culture, joy and goodliness
 Be th' equal right of all :
 That Greed no more shall those oppress
 Who by the wayside fall :*

*“ That each shall share what all men sow :
 That colour, caste 's a lie :
 That man is God, however low—
 Is man, however high.”*

Dawnward ?

Who wrongs the poor for revels, pays
His dues to Nemesis :
Who with Oppression's Gorgon plays
Shall hear her serpents hiss.

The bard for lowly service meant
Fawns on the great to-day :
From Art, the cancer of content
Eats nerve and blood away.

Great brains with power divine endowed
To teach, exalt, persuade,
Dole Wisdom tinted, as allowed
By those by whom they're paid.

While starvelings stumble to despair
For lack of but a guide,
The miser hermits everywhere
Their hoards of learning hide.

The vices of decadence here
Already levy toll,
For Sybaris and Lydian leer
Pollute the modern soul.

In Romes we build of rapine, crime,
And grim monopolies,
Incipient Caesars bide their time,
And deadlier Crassus his.

For tho' the Sun, Democracy,
Arises slow and large,
With glory that should never die
Upon our era's marge ;

Yet while all men to manhood fare
 By its illuming breath,
 A baser orb is lurking there,
 Emitting rays of death.

Yea, Wealth, one time a useful thrall
 In needful menial toil,
 Usurps the pen, the senate hall,
 Is satrap of the soil.

He dares to stamp his sordid tests
 On learning, art and love,
 Soils, blasphemous, the very nests
 Of white Religion's dove.

His whims release the hells of war,
 He gags the consul, judge,
 And helpless peoples hopeless for
 His pander, Commerce, drudge.

The love of fame, or for a Cause,
 The True, the Good, obeys
 The subtle mandates of the laws
 Wherewith the soul he sways.

And, queen of his infectious train,
 Corruption spreads her fees
 Till e'en the democratic brain
 Shows symptoms of disease.



Heard, from the speaking stones that strew
 The hillside of Success;
 From spheres whose harmonies anew
 Can those who listen bless;

Dawnward ?

From breaths of every sacred isle
By which my Muses move,
Released from battle's claim a while,
In Brendan voyage of Love ;

From shambles of the Dispossessed ;
From Croesus in his sty ;
From old Democracy obsessed
By fiends about to die :

Read, in the scars of veterans
In Want's resultless fray ;
In noon-day Science' futile plans
To yoke the soul to clay ;

In watchings of the social sky
And soundings of its deep ;
And where Oppression's vultures fly,
And sad Redeemers weep ;

'Neath living palimpsests of Pain ;
On shards of deathless song ;
In God's magnificent disdain
Of Might enthroned on Wrong ;

Read where, unheeded, outcastes groan,
And waits Rebellion's form :
These verses voice an undertone—
The prelude to a storm ?

SONG OF THE OLD SUN-DIAL

Dawnward ?

"Horas non numero nisi serenas."



SING no nítric lays of truth,
But filigree the mildewed past
With eerie fay-lore, verve of youth,
Romance and burgeonry of caste :
I strive that Glory's charnel-room
No gentle nostril overpowers :

Tho' grief a million days may gloom,
"I only count the sunny hours."

The sky may warn, in cirrus scroll,
Of cataclysmic change ahead :
Insistent stratus layer with dole
Horizons spacious Hope had spread ;
Weird wrongs may mass their cumuli,
Or, lurid, belch from nimbus' towers :
These weary Joy. I pass them by,
And "only count the sunny hours."

The dark is for "the common herd"
By whom the dirty work is done ;
By whom life's sweetmeats are prepared
For those who can enjoy the sun.
You'd have me pen their shoddy strife,
And deem their fungus virtues flowers ?
Deny that glad repose is life,
And cease to "count the sunny hours" ?

Tho' women soiled blaspheme the nights
And veins of men are leeches for gold,
Tho' truculent Ambition blights,
And vulture Hunger hovers bold ;
There are a few who know not this,
A lily few in rosy bowers,
To spare their dainty hearts it is,
"I only count the sunny hours."



PENCIL glaring wings of Right
 With Wrong's sedater black ;
 And rushing Freedom's crotchets with
 Resurgent minims slack.

I paralyse the hand of God
 When He would loose at last
 The gales of vengeance on the ripe
 Enormities of caste.

For froward Duty hesitates
 When wrongs grow vested rights,
 And squealing Pity wards the blow
 Relentless Justice smites.

The limpid clarity of Truth
 I phosphoresce with lies,
 And put sophistic hectics on
 The pallor of the Wise.

My brews that change to mead of Lust
 Love's vapid hydromel,
 Should tempt the very seraphim
 To nuptials of hell.



WHEN Egypt's secret science solved
 The mysteries of God,
 When wonders of the world evolved
 To every Pharaoh's nod,

Sad Israel, with tasks o'erweighed,
 A wormwood chalice drank,
 Or, toys of luxury and trade,
 To slow perdition sank.

The Pharaohs now are fellaheen—
 Bond-bled 'neath Hebrew sway,
 Where cycles saw their glory green,
 Simoom and desert play.



Tho' Athens lured from Silence Song,
 And Form from Chaos graved;
 Through centuries of Turkish wrong,
 Unpitied, robbed, enslaved,

She penance did for cities sacked,
 For slavery allowed,
 For sea-kissed Syracuse, attacked
 On clamour of the crowd.

Tho' Greece in light the old world laved
 (By tidal Homer's song
 Love-linked), and Europe's pastures saved
 From Xerxes' locust throng;

Tho' Greater Greece in majesty
 From Gaul to Ganges swayed:
 Their age-long vice and tyranny
 With age-long bonds were paid.

Dawnward ?

Rome gave us Lore and Law, and sowed
Great norms of Liberty ;
But dawning peoples overrode
With callous usury.

She held them sponges but to squeeze,
And not her trust from God—
The maid for foul adulteries,
The man for tax and rod.

Too wide she would at height of pride
Her loose-held confines spread,
So Goth and Parthian myriads died
That Roman greed be fed.

She sickened so, she could not breed
Upholders of her might ;
She armed the stranger in her need,
She hired her foes to fight.

Then, to such tint as Verres bled
The flesh of Sicily
Paled fatted Rome, when Etzel fed
His Hunnish chivalry.

Lethargic grew her vitals, sucked
By parasites she bare,
The vulture Goths this eagle plucked,
And cawed the Vandals " There ! "



And those great Empires of the Seas—
Tyre, Carthage, Holland, Spain—
Developed golden gluttonies,
Grew bandits of the main.

The trade they found so deft a tool
At last they made their goal,
And for the maxims of its school
Each lost its very soul.

While smugly on their gods they fawned,
Whole realms their wars would blight
To sell a drug, exact a bond,
Acquire an Ophir site.

A vassal or a daughter State
They sowed 'neath every sky,
But goaded them into the hate
That mothers Liberty.

To-day Oblivion's mask, Decay,
Bemoans their old renown ;
The mermaids of the Silent Bay
Have dragged those sailors down.

" Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth."



ALTHOUGH our satraps can o'erflow
 Their storied miles with wool and grain,
 And galleons to Britain go
 With tribute rich of mine and plain :

The foodless child, the sterile dame
 In every city's streets appear,
 And workhouse roofs already shame
 The palaces of pride we rear.

The native flocks that Hope had bred,
 Imported errors, thriving, blast ;
 O'er our young nations' faces spread
 The roué pallors of the Past.

In ghastly barrack-rooms of Trade,
 Mephitic lane and sweater's den,
 Its ogres rob the ripening maid
 Of power to gift the world with men.

With Helot joys and scanty crust,
 Its Youth drifts on to middle life,
 Supplied with outlets for his lust,
 But daring not to love a wife.

And 'mid its wildernesses, lo !
 Its bands of wifeless men migrate
 With sagging loads of care and woe
 And meagre wallets soured with hate :

Down parched gullies of Defeat,
 By salt-pan stretches of Despair,
 To goads of endless thirst and heat,
 On aimless tramps to God-Knows-Where.

Yet we who hope and therefore love
Will from its stains the picture clean,
Will blue the sky of brass above
And plough the desert grey to green.

Our Herculean Demos who
With wild "Eurekas!" in his youth
Emerging despotisms slew,
Shall rid our land of all this ruth.

With club of Justice he shall fright
The gold-beast from his human prey ;
Shall drive with arrowed Love and Light
Despair's Stymphalian birds away :

Shall so renew, upbuild, conserve
Our natal rights to shelter, food,
That none need lack who will deserve
The joys of parenthood.

From trees that Eld had never known
He'll bring us seeded Virtue, Health ;
Yea, snatch from Europe's Art her zone
To glorify our Commonwealth.

Of the verses herein contained, those grouped under the title "Dawnward?" were printed originally in *The Bulletin*: with the exception of "Prosperity," which appeared in *The Tocsin*; "Hate," in *The Champion*; and "A Poet of the Moment" and "A Keynote," now first published. Excepting "The Seed Time," part of which was printed in *The Tocsin*, the remaining pieces were printed in *The Bulletin*.

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A Personal Note

Australian, of Irish parentage and Celtic descent, Bernard Patrick O'Dowd was born at Beaufort, Victoria, on 11th April, 1866. His father, a police constable who had turned in later life to farming, came from the county of Monaghan: his mother (still living) from the county of Antrim. In 1889 he married Evangeline Fryer: their four children are named Montaigne Eric Whitman, Rudel Arion, Auster Bernard, and Amergin Oisín.

O'Dowd was brought up in the Roman Catholic faith, and received his early education in Victorian State schools chiefly. In boyhood he served as an acolyte at the altar, and was "confirmed" at the age of eight or nine. At about the same time he received his school certificate as "sufficiently educated" (!) under the Victorian Education Act. At fourteen he passed Melbourne University matriculation examination at the Mount Pleasant State school, and won a State school exhibition which took him to Grenville College, Ballarat. Before he was seventeen, he passed his first year examination for the degree of B.A. Owing to the death of his father, his formal education was suspended for several years, during a portion of which he taught school at Beaufort. In 1886 he entered the Victorian public service by examination: he is now assistant librarian of the Supreme Court, Melbourne. In 1888 he resumed his University course, and finished his Bachelor course in Arts in 1889, with honours in Philosophy in 1891. He has been admitted to the Victorian Bar.

O'Dowd is made of the stuff of prophets and martyrs. His early manhood was a period of mental turbulence in which hereditary and religious forces encountered the shock of the modern spirit, and were diverted from creed and ceremonial into paths of social self-sacrifice and democratic struggle. To his active, earnest, ascetic mind no knowledge came amiss. He was at once learner and teacher, studying law, history, and religion, interested in spiritualism, socialism, communism, anarchism, and mysticism, and holding fervent Sunday classes in all manner of subjects from poetry to ethics. As writer and lecturer he dabbled in politics, compiled a Secularist service book called *The Lyceum Tutor*, supported the Labour movement, spoke for Australian independence, helped to found *The Tocsin*, penned verses and articles, corresponded with Whitman, and edited law-books.

O'Dowd's verse is written less for literary effect than to point and enforce his thought. He has scanty lyrical faculty, and sings not "as a linnet sings": in truth, he rarely sings at all. Many of his closely-packed lines are dissonant to the ear, however vivid to the eye. He writes in pictures, not in melodies; and though sometimes his heat of surging emotion will bring sonority, more often his work is insufficiently fused in consciousness and the expression of his idea is marred. But technical shortcomings detract little from the value of his verse considered philosophically. Widely-read, he has unusual command of bold and recondite imagery; and some of his epigrammatic lines hold the tense strength of proverbs. When his enthusiasm crystallises in a noble phrase, he moves one no less than Emerson or Goethe. No other Australian verse-writer has breathed such a flame of social aspiration: none has compassed an utterance of such intellectual inspiration.

A. G. S.

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